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*Aug<sup>r</sup> H Lockman*

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# SEKING J. ANDRESEN

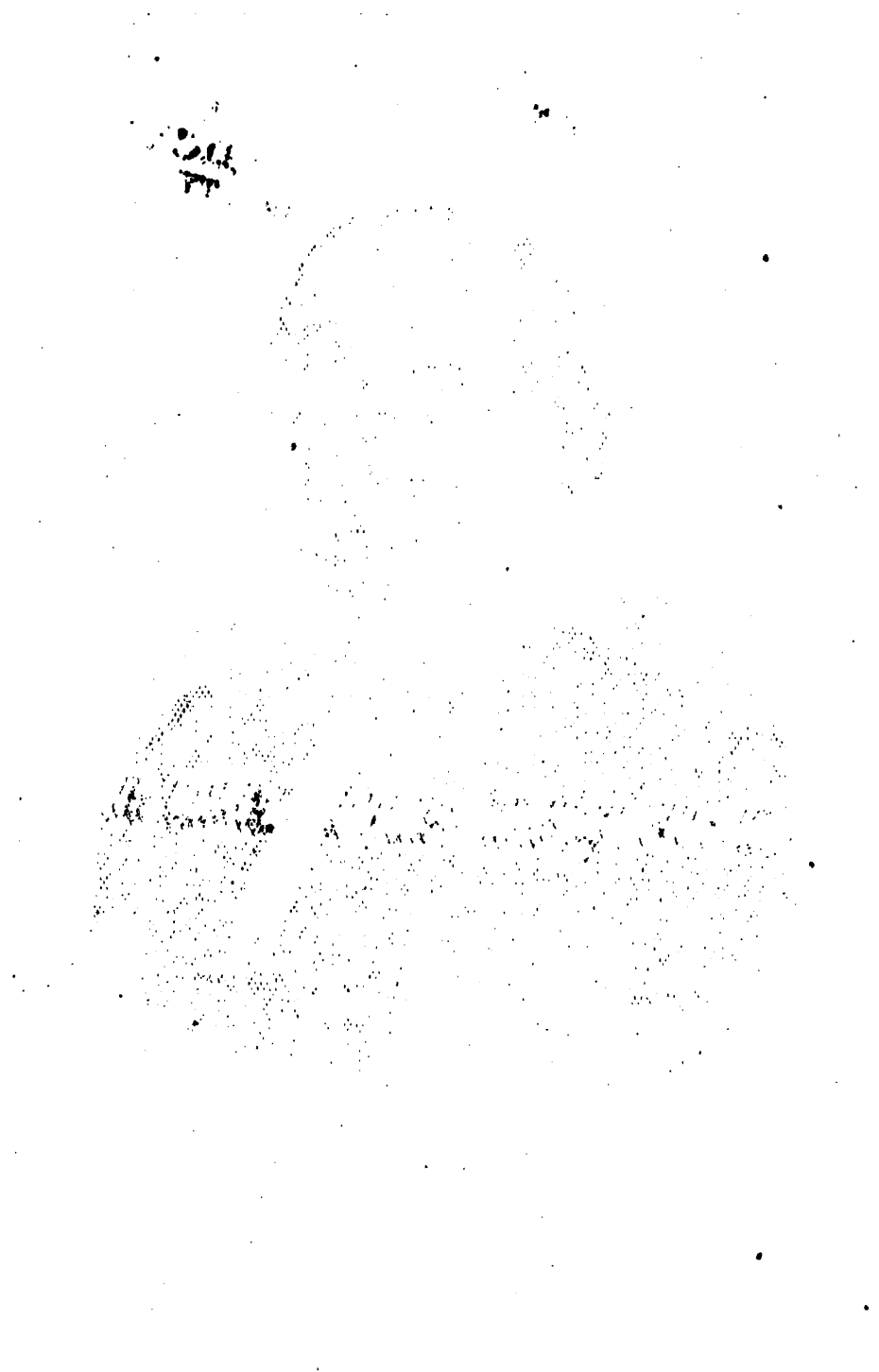
REV. J. ANDRESEN

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY AND HISTORY

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

TO THE UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

1880



LUTHERAN  
HISTORICAL  
PRACTICAL SOCIETY.

# SERMONS AND ADDRESSES

BY

REV. A. H. <sup>August 15</sup> LOCHMAN, D. D.,  
                    

FOR FORTY-SIX YEARS PASTOR OF CHRIST EVANGEL-  
ICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, YORK, PA.

PRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF MANY OF HIS FRIENDS AND  
FORMER PARISHIONERS.

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YORK, PA.,  
TEACHERS' JOURNAL OFFICE,  
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## THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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A desire having been expressed, of having in print some of the sermons, delivered by their pastor during his long ministry among them, I reluctantly yielded to the request. It is but due to myself to state, that they were not written for publication. They were prepared for my regular pulpit services in a plain style and with a practical tendency, not to captivate and please, but to benefit the hearers. They were not all fully written out, nor delivered as they were written, but rather full outlines, filled out as the inspiration of the moment, and the Spirit of God gave me utterance. This will readily be observed by the reader, and he will be able to carry out the idea, though not fully expressed.

It must be borne in mind, that four regular services had to be prepared during the week; two for each Sunday, and two for weekly lectures, and all this with the pressure of the care of a large congregation, the many funerals, and other pastoral work, and due allowance will be made for any imperfections.

The reader need not expect to find any attempt at display of learning, or anything to gain applause, but merely plain and simple exhibitions of the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion. Nor has the author followed any particular homiletical rules, as these often rather cramp than give full scope to the powers of the intellect and the feelings of the heart.

I have not hesitated to use the opinions of others, nor even at times, the words in which these opinions were expressed. Sometimes I have used expressions from sermons preached before, when they fell in with the range of thought on another text. To some ministers and others, who may find fault with this course, I would only say, "Let him that is without fault cast the first-stone."

It will be observed, that there is not generally a long and labored application to these sermons. One reason is, you will sometimes find applications of the truths presented, running through the whole sermon; another reason is, that the author often made the application impromptu from the gushings of his own heart, impressed by the truth. These sermons were printed from the original copy, without re-writing.

With the hope, that when my days on earth are ended, I may, though dead, yet preach, and do the Master's work, I send forth this volume. My earnest request, of all who attended my ministry, is, "Remember the words I spake to you, while I was yet with you." With these preparatory remarks, this volume is sent forth with all its imperfections, of which no one is more fully conscious, than the author,

**AUG. H. LOCHMAN.**



## PUBLISHER'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

---

The following Sermons and Addresses are published at the request of many of the friends and former parishioners of the venerable author. Dr. Lochman was pastor of Christ Lutheran Church for nearly half a century. During these years he preached many able and impressive sermons, some of which made a deep impression on his hearers, and have done much good. It was believed that a selection from these sermons would be very interesting and edifying to the members of his former congregation, and to christians generally. The book will be a memento of their former beloved pastor, who will thus continue to speak to them from the printed page, even after he shall have gone to his reward in heaven.

As these sermons are highly instructive and practical they will be useful to ministers as models of sermonizing, and especially to laymen, on account of the deep and fervent piety that pervades them all. They may also serve a useful purpose to be read at home on Sunday by those who may be providentially prevented from attending the public preaching of

the gospel. They are also well adapted to be read in church in lieu of a preached sermon in the absence of the pastor.

It will be observed that the first two are called Memorial Sermons. In these the author gives a brief historical sketch of Christ church, up to the close of his own ministry, which will be very valuable for reference.

These sermons were printed from the original manuscripts, some of them written many years ago, and in very small hand-writing, with numerous abbreviations, which often made it very difficult for the compositor to determine the sense.

With these few remarks the book is sent forth on its mission with the hope and prayer that it may be the means of doing much good.

P. ANSTADT.

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## MEMORIAL SERMON. I.

---

[THIS SERMON WAS PREACHED, OCTOBER, 1876.]

---

TEXT.—And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no. Deut. viii. 2.

It is profitable, at times, to review God's dealings with us in the past, both as individuals and as a congregation. It may serve to call forth our gratitude to God for his gracious dealings with us—to humble us, to impress us with a deep sense of our obligations to Him, and to call forth increased activity in our advancement in the divine life and for the advancement of the interests of the cause of Christ.

To review the past, we are often admonished in the sacred Scriptures. To this we are called in the text, and the apostle exhorts, "But call to remembrance the former days." Heb. viii. 32.

By resolution of Synod at its last session, it was made the duty of every pastor to preach a sermon giving a history of his congregation from its formation to the present day—setting forth its progress and development, and also, that these sermons be

preserved in the archives of the historical society, for the benefit of those who may come after us.

This is in perfect accordance with the injunction of the text. It is peculiarly appropriate for us, so far as our relation as pastor and people is concerned. For it is just forty years that we have sustained this relation to each other. Forty years Moses was the leader of Israel's hosts; during these years, God wonderfully led them through the dangers of the wilderness, and brought them into the promised land. Through forty years God has preserved my life and health among you, and wonderfully led this congregation through various severe trials and changes, and highly favored and prospered it, for which we are in duty bound to thank, praise, serve and obey him.

- I. *We will take a review of the congregation, from its organization to the time when I commenced my ministry.*
- II. *Its history during my ministry.*
- III. *The duty devolving upon us from the consideration of what God has done for us.*

The records of our congregation date back one hundred and forty-four years. In the year 1733, twenty-four heads of families united to form a congregation, purchased a book for church records, and

each subscribed his name. This book, one hundred and forty-four years old, is yet in our possession.

York then had scarcely an existence, the members were scattered for miles around; for eleven years they had no house of worship, but held their service in private houses and were served by ministers from Philadelphia, Lancaster and other places.

In 1744, the first house of worship was built, on the present site, the lot having been generously donated by the proprietor of Pennsylvania. This house was built of wood, and the congregation was served by Revs. Bager, Hochheimer and Raus. During the ministry of Rev. Raus, a man of learning, piety and eloquence, the congregation rapidly increased, so that the building became too small, and another, a stone edifice, 67x40, was built. The cornerstone of this church was laid June 2d, and in October, 1762, it was dedicated to the service of the Triune God. How long Rev. Raus preached in the wooden, and how long in the stone church, we have no means of determining.

After Raus, Revs. Cornell and Kurtz preached in this church, the latter for about twenty years with great success, and died in the 67th year of his age. After Kurtz, the Rev. Jacob Gøering, a man of a cultivated mind, of ardent piety, a faithful preacher,

served the congregation for twenty-one years and entered upon his eternal rest in the 53d year of his age. He was held in the highest esteem, and, as a testimony of regard, a tablet to his memory was placed within the altar railing, which yet remains in the same position in the lecture room.

In 1809, the Rev. J. G. Schmucker was called as pastor, and, as the building was giving way, (the walls having cracked,) a meeting of the congregation was held to consult what was to be done. As usual, there was a diversity of opinion; some thought it was best to repair the old church, others were in favor of building a new one. One old gentleman, who was a blacksmith, said he could make an iron hoop and bind the wall so securely that it would last for years. (He no doubt thought it would be a profitable job). It was, however, concluded to build a new and larger church. According to this decision, the present church, 65x75 feet, was erected. The corner-stone was laid on the 2d of July, 1812, and it was consecrated on the 1st of March, 1814.

About the year 1830, preaching in the English language was introduced and has since been regularly held. Dr. Schmucker preached occasionally, then the Rev. J. Oswald was invited to preach in the English language as an assistant. Dr. Schmucker

preached with great acceptance and profit to the congregation for twenty-seven years, when he resigned.

This completes the history of the congregation previous to my pastorship.

On the 10th of February, 1836, I received a regular call signed by the vestry (*Kirchenrath*) as follows: Elders: John Barnitz, President, Thomas Baumgardner, Martin Weigel, Adam Henry, Gottlieb Ziegle, Jacob B. Wentz, Mathias Smyser, Henry Peters, Michael Ebert, Jacob Laumaster; wardens: John Shive, George Moyer, Daniel Fackler, William Faber.

In obedience to this call, I removed from Harrisburg to York on the 17th of April, 1836, and on the following Sunday preached my introductory sermon. The first thing of importance which I would notice is the building of a convenient lecture room adjoining the parsonage on north George street. Previous to this time, we held our weekly meetings in the old parochial school-house in the rear of the church, which on account of the desks and benches was very inconvenient, and soon was too small for the increasing numbers of those who attended; it was therefore resolved to build a larger and more convenient one. Steps were immediately



taken to carry out this undertaking. On the 14th of August, 1836, the corner-stone was laid; the cost of the building was \$1,287.

Soon after my taking charge, a number of the members of the congregation formed another and purely English congregation, called Saint Paul's, and chose the Rev. J. Oswald as pastor, which by the blessing of God has become a large and flourishing church.

In the course of time, the younger members not understanding the German language, it was thought advisable to build a church for their accommodation. In accordance with a resolution of the vestry, the consent of the congregation having been obtained, preparations were made and the corner-stone of a building 51x70 was laid on the 25th of August, 1850, and in due time was completed and dedicated. This congregation, now under the pastoral care of Rev. A. W. Lilly, has also prospered, and is now one of the prominent congregations in York.

The next event of importance was the refitting of the church, as it stood in great need of it. In 1852, this was resolved upon. A new, more modern pulpit was put in, with a larger altar railing, six additional pews, new roof, carpets, gas, and the

whole church with the steeple was painted. (This was twenty-four years ago.)

Next, the Union Lutheran Church over the bridge was built to accommodate our members and persons living in that part of the town. And a few years ago, an exclusively German congregation was organized principally by members of our church. This congregation has built a very fine church. In addition to these, three congregations have been organized within our bounds in the country, and have erected commodious houses of worship. With all these changes our congregation appears as strong as ever. God has through these forty years taken care of us, and we commit her interests to Him for the future.

The next important step in the history of the congregation was the entire remodelling of the church. Having no lecture room, we had to hold our Sunday-school and weekly meetings in the church, which was very inconvenient, as the house could not be kept as clean for public worship as it ought to be, and as the building was very much out of repairs, it was apparent to all that something had to be done. The matter was thoroughly considered by the vestry, and submitted to the congregatton, and at a large meeting it was resolved thoroughly to

remodel the church, by making a lecture-room in the lower story and the audience chamber in the second story. On the 28th of April, 1874, workmen began to take out the pews and galleries. The last service was held on the 26th of April, 1874. Having now no place for worship and Sunday-school, the vestry rented the Odd Fellows' Hall, where we worshipped the Sunday after we left the church, viz., the 3d of May, so that there was no intermission of our services even for one Sunday. We preached in the Hall a little over six months, and the lecture-room being finished, we took possession of it on the 20th of October, on which day it was dedicated. We held our worship in the lecture-room a little over six months, from October, 1874, to May, 1875, when the church was finished and dedicated anew with appropriate religious exercises.

Of the work, it is not necessary to say anything, it speaks for itself. The remodelling and furnishing cost about \$20,000. We have now a church and lecture-room which will compare favorably with any in our town. This is a proof that their descendants have not neglected the legacy left them by their fathers. It is a fact, which, with feelings of sincere gratitude towards the great Head of the Church, we should ever cherish, that with all the trials and diffi-

culties and drains upon the church consequent upon the formation of so many congregations springing from ours, it has steadily maintained its ground and is now as strong as ever. And may we not cherish the hope that the word preached and the ordinances administered during these many years have been blessed to the awakening of some and the building up of others in their Christian faith and life. We rejoice in being able to say, that the Lord has given us some souls as seals to our ministry, as proofs that we have not labored altogether in vain.

It would yet remain to take up the third head of our discourse, viz., The duty devolving upon us from the consideration of what God has done for us in the past. This would, however, require more time than we have left at present. We shall therefore, God willing, take up the subject on next Sunday morning.

And now, in view of what God has done for us as a church, it becomes every member, both old and young, to take a lively and increased interest in her welfare—to live, labor, pray and contribute, so that this congregation may exert a mighty influence for good in this community, that her walls shall be called salvation and her gates praise. Let every member catch the spirit of the prophet and deter-

mine, "For Zion's sake, will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake, will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

## MEMORIAL SERMON. II.

---

TEXT.—And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. Deut. viii. 2.

On last Sunday we preached from this text, and, in accordance with a resolution of Synod, took a review of the history of our congregation from its commencement unto the present time.

- I. *We took a review from its origin to the time when I commenced my ministry.*
- II. *Its history during my ministry.*
- III. *We intended to show and enforce the duty devolving upon us, in view of God's gracious dealings with us as a congregation.*

Time would not permit us to dwell upon the third point, hence we postponed it to this time. We therefore will endeavor to present and enforce the duty devolving upon us as a congregation from what God has done for us.

God has something to do for every member of the congregation, both old and young. This is too often lost sight of. Many there are whose names are on the church register who feel little interest in

her welfare, and do nothing for her prosperity, either by influence, prayer or liberality. Nay, their influence and example do more harm than good. Many, since they became members, have never yet prayed for the church and pastor, and have, in proportion to their means, contributed little or nothing towards the upbuilding and prosperity of Zion. To stir up each one to do his or her duty, as God in his word requires, is the object of this discourse.

It has long been my earnest desire to have our house of worship appropriately refitted. On this subject I preached sermon after sermon, to this object I gave my labors and efforts, as you all must testify. And now I would specially direct my utmost efforts to advance the spiritual interests of the congregation. To aid me in this I would ask the co-operation of every member of the church. When Moses was engaged in battle with the Amalekites, (the enemies of Israel,) he at God's command was to hold up his hands, and as long as he held them up Israel prevailed, but when he let them hang down, Amalek prevailed, but the battle was long and fierce, and Moses' hands became heavy, and he himself weary, so that Aaron and Hur took a stone and sat him on it and stayed his hands, the one on one side

and the other on the other side, and Israel prevailed against Amalek.

Brethren, you leave the burden of this congregation resting too much on me alone, as though I had all, and you comparatively little to do. My heart is often discouraged, my hands heavy; it is your duty to stand by me, some on one side, some on the other, to aid me by your prayers and influence. There is too much lukewarmness among us, there are too many dry branches marring the beauty and hindering the fruitfulness of this tree of God's planting. Many are like those in the parable of the householder, who, when invited to labor in the vineyard, are standing idle in the world's market-place. To such the Lord addresses the scathing rebuke, "Why stand ye here all the day idle." Others, like members of the church at Ephesus, have lost their first love, and others, like the church at Laodicea, are neither cold nor hot, to whom the Lord says, He will spew them out of his mouth. To the Israelites standing fearful and irresolute on the shore of the Red sea, God said by his servant Moses, "Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward." When God called upon the Israelites to call to remembrance all that he had done for them as a nation, especially his wondrous works during their forty



years travelling in the wilderness, he designed that this should exercise a happy, awakening, humbling, and stimulating influence upon them; the text says it was to humble them, to prove them, and to bring them to a determination to keep his commandments.

- I. *A remembrance of the past is to teach us that God requires of us just in proportion to what he has done for us.*
- II. *A remembrance of what God has done for us in the past should bring us to examine how far we have requited him for what he has done.*
- III. *To bring us to a decision what we ought to do.*

No truth is set forth more clearly in the sacred Scriptures than this, that God requires of us just in proportion to what he has done for us. The Savior said (Luke xii. 48.) "Unto whom much is given, of him much will be required." This principle is acknowledged and acted upon by men of the world.

Now judging ourselves by this rule, what has the Lord not a right to require of us as individuals and as a congregation? In a review of the history of our church on last Sunday evening, we have seen what great things the Lord has done for us. From a very unpropitious beginning, He has raised us up

to a large, numerous congregation. For upwards of one hundred and thirty years, it has been supplied with the regular preaching of the gospel and all the instituted means of grace. In reference to us, God can reprovngly inquire as He did of the Jewish church, "What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done for it?"

Now God has placed us in his vineyard to labor in it. "Go work in my vineyard" is his charge to every one of us. Some have scarcely ever thought of this. God could indeed carry on his work without us, but he always works through means and instrumentalities, and he enstamps a great honor upon his people when he makes them co-laborers with himself. The apostle thus considered it and gloried in it. This thought should stimulate and encourage us in our work, for if we labor with God, and if he labors through and with us, we cannot fail, we need not fear the result, our labors if honest and faithful will be crowned with success. Now, I have a work to do, to preach the gospel, to be an example to the flock, according to the charge of the apostle to Timothy, 2 Tim. iv. 2, "To preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering." Brethren, I feel the fearful responsibility of my office, and am ready to cry,

“Lord, who is sufficient for these things?” Yet, relying upon the promised aid of the Master, we will endeavor to do his work, though it be in much weakness and imperfection.

Next to me in responsibility stand the church council. I tell you, my brethren, it is not a small matter to be set over a congregation as a vestry. Next to mine are your responsibilities; you have publicly, before God, assumed the duties of your office, to give an example to the church of regular attendance at public worship and at the table of the Lord, to feel an interest in training up the young in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to see that the indebtedness of the church, if any, be liquidated, that the pastor be adequately supported and the current expenses be made up. Compare your efforts with your duty! Have you come up to the measure of your requirements? Again, every individual member of the church ought to take an active interest in its welfare.

The apostle Peter, writing to the Christians scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia says, 1 Pet. i. 15, “Be ye holy in all manner of conversation;” and again, 2 Pet. iii. 11, “What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness.”

No member of a church has a right to live in any known sin. O what a reproach do many professing Christians bring upon the church by their inconsistent conduct! Is it a wonder that many, especially of the young, lack all reverence for religion and stand aloof from the church? The only hope for the church in the future is in the young. The fathers and mothers are fast passing away, and who shall fill their places?

We have called to remembrance what God has done for us, how he has led us and blessed us, lo! these many long years. Have our efforts been in any degree commensurate with what God has done for us? O how far short have we come in our duty! Should not this deeply humble us and arouse us to rise and labor, pray and contribute of our means, that our congregation may exert a mighty influence for good and stand forth "a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish?" Eph. v. 27. A calling to remembrance of what God has done for us and how far short we have come to requite Him for all his goodness should humble us in the dust, should fill us with shame and godly sorrow, and with a desire of forgiveness.

Again, another effect of this remembrance—

“to prove us to know what is in thine heart.” The idea is not that God must prove us, that He might know what influence his long continued goodness has had upon us, and how our hearts are affected toward him, but that we might know. He would bring us to a self-consciousness of our sin and the condition of our hearts. This is the first step to reformation and repentance.

And now to attain to this let each of us remember what God has done for us as a church, and then inquire, examine and prove ourselves, how we as members have lived and acted our part—as minister, as church council, as individual members. As your minister, I am sensible of many shortcomings, and heartily pray God for Christ’s sake to forgive and help me to be more faithful in the future. Let the council and all the members do the same. Our examination should bring us to decide whether we will in the future keep God’s commandments or not. It is not in most cases ignorance which keeps men from becoming Christians, nor, if Christians, from living up to their privileges and duty, but it is because of their indecision, halting, wavering and putting off to a more convenient season. It is, however, a dangerous and fearful thing to postpone to a more convenient season a present known duty.

When will it be more convenient ? when paralyzed and perplexed with cares and bowed down with afflictions, when upon a bed of languishing and pain or upon the bed of death ?

And now, brethren, we have attempted to put you in mind of your duty towards God and the church. May God incline your hearts and help you to live to his praise and to do your part in the building up of the spiritual temple of the Lord. Amen.

## ORDINATION SERMON.

---

[PREACHED IN GREENCASTLE.]

---

TEXT.—Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.—Acts xx. 28.

This was the charge of the great apostle of the gentiles to the elders of the church at Ephesus. It was the winding up of that masterly parting address to that church, which sets forth his deep interest in their behalf and his conviction of the importance and responsibility of the gospel ministry. If any man ever had just conceptions of the dignity and responsibility of the gospel ministry, that man was Paul. Favored as he was with an ecstatic vision of the heavenly glory, caught up into the third heaven, he seems to have stood in the very audience chamber of the Almighty, and, dazzled with the splendor of the court of heaven from which he received his commission, he exclaimed, “Now, then, are we ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us—we pray you, in Christ’s stead be ye reconciled to God.” Grasp fully if you can the idea, “am-

bassadors for Christ"—commissioned by him, representing him, standing in his stead with offers of peace to a rebel world, beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God. This is the highest office a man can hold. O the dignity of the office we hold! O the fearful responsibility which rests upon us! The apostle whilst he endeavored to make full proof of his own ministry was anxious that others invested with the same office should do the same. Hence the repeated admonitions to the ministers of his day, "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead, preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all patience and longsuffering." "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The whole of his epistle to Titus is a charge to fidelity in his ministerial office.

As Paul was on his journey to Jerusalem, not knowing what might befall him there, or whether they should ever see his face again, he called the elders of Ephesus together and gave them the charge in the text, "Take heed unto yourselves, and unto all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers."



Brethren, appointed by you to preach the ordination sermon, I trust it will not be considered presumptuous or out of place in me, the oldest member of the Synod, to address the charge in the text to you all, including myself.

I. *Christian ministers as overseers over the church of God.*

An overseer is a person appointed by another to superintend and manage his business in his stead and to whom he is accountable. So Christian ministers are appointed by the Lord to superintend and manage the interests of the church of God under the direction of Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, to whom they are accountable for the manner in which they attend to and perform the duties of this trust.

The word *episcopos*, which is here translated overseer, is in other places rendered elder and bishop. But by reading the connection we find that they are synonymous and convertible terms. From the appellation of bishop, some have endeavored to prove that Christ himself instituted a superior order in the ministry, invested with special powers, by whom alone certain functions are to be performed; and yet, with a strange inconsistency, they permit the ordinary pastor to dispense the sacrament of the

Lord's supper, whilst none but the bishop is allowed to administer confirmation, which is not a sacrament. That this order of ministers may in some countries, as a mere matter of church polity, be justifiable we would not deny. But that it is of divine appointment we do not believe. We hold to the declaration of the Savior, "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren." (Matt. xiii. 8.)

The apostle puts his construction upon the word overseers when he tells us what as overseers they are to do: to feed the church of God, to exercise the care of a shepherd over it, to feed it with wholesome food, direct, guide, protect it against the assaults of its enemies.

• We are to feed the flock not with speculative theories, idle fancies, or foolish and unlearned questions—not with abstract truths or philosophic discussions on the beauty of virtue. You may thus gain applause of men, but you will never gain souls for Christ, nor have seals to your ministry or crowns of rejoicing at the great day. We are to preach the great essential doctrines of our holy religion, which suit the condition and meet the wants of men as lost, undone and perishing sinners: The depravity of the human heart; the necessity of moral regeneration; the allsufficiency of the atonement; the

willingness and ability of Jesus Christ to save sinners, even the chief of sinners; the allsufficiency of his grace to sustain his people amidst all their conflicts and trials, to advance them in the divine life and keep them unto eternal life. We must preach the truth, *but the truth as it is in Jesus*. Brethren, every truth of the scriptures, when irradiated by the light and glory of the cross of Jesus Christ, appears not only in a new light, but also to receive a peculiar efficacy and power. In him, all the rays of gospel truth are concentrated to a focus and brought to bear upon the understanding and heart with a warning, quickening, burning influence. Hence it was that the apostle determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. He brought his own heart to the cross to have it warmed and fired there, to receive a new inspiration and a new baptism of the Holy Ghost; and therein lay the secret of his success. I would, then, present the great apostle as a worthy model for every preacher of the gospel: In regard to the subject matter of his preaching Christ crucified; in regard to the manner in faithful simplicity; in his ardent zeal, which made him lose and forget himself, whilst his soul was absorbed by the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

II. *The divine appointment of the faithful minister next claims attention.*

The text says, "Over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers." We would by no means speak in disparagement of, nor undervalue, a setting apart of men to the gospel ministry by the duly constituted authorities of the church; nay, we would not have any man exercise the sacred office without it. The apostle would have Timothy ever bear in mind that he was thus solemnly set apart for this work. "Neglect not," says he, "the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, and which you are authorized publicly to exercise by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." (1 Tim. iv. 14.) From this passage some have maintained the opinion that there was some special sacred gift or influence imparted by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery or elders. I think this cannot fairly be made out from this passage. The gift spoken of *was* in him, I think it was the saving grace of God in him, his ardent piety, that unfeigned faith which dwelt first in his mother and grandmother; in short, it was the qualifications for the ministry which he possessed; this gift he should stir up, bring into active use when he was set apart to the ministry, and of this the apostle put him in

remembrance by the laying on of hands. This state of piety was wrought in him through prophecy, through the preaching of the word, accompanied by the Holy Spirit, who was promised in prophecy. This rendering is strengthened in my mind by referring to 2 Tim. i. 6, where the apostle says, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which *is in thee*." Stir it up by the remembrance of the laying on of the hands of the apostles." And in the next verse he says, "God has not given us the spirit of fear," (now here is the gift) "but the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind,"—viz: the qualifications necessary for a faithful and successful preacher. Our text however plainly asserts that ministers as overseers of the flock are appointed by the Holy Ghost—"over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers."

We claim not indeed a direct and immediate special call from heaven, accompanied with the necessary qualifications in a miraculous manner, but we do look for such influences upon our understanding, heart and conscience by which, after prayerful meditation, we may determine our duty in reference to this matter.

Brethren, our commission must bear the seal and stamp of heaven. If it does not, we subject

ourselves to the reproach, "I have not sent these prophets yet they ran, I have not spoken to them yet they prophesy." Jer. xxiii. 31.

And now take heed to the admonition, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves." That a minister of the gospel should be a Christian is admitted by all. Whatever other qualifications he may possess, without a heart glowing with love to God and love to man, his preaching will be but a cold, formal exhibition of truth, or, if he sometimes kindles and fires up, it will be but the warmth of eloquence, which may delight and charm his hearers, but seldom stir their consciences and reach their hearts. But when his own soul glows with the heavenly fire, when the rays of the sun of righteousness shine upon and warm his own soul, then he with the Spirit's blessing may catch up these rays, concentrate and bring them to a burning focus upon the hearts of the hearers. When often, like Moses on the mount, he holds communion with his God, he will bring down with him the reflection of the eternal Jehovah, and appearing before his people with this radiance yet upon him he must exert a powerful influence. This admonition, "Take heed first to yourselves," is peculiarly necessary for ministers.

It is thought that the office of the ministry is

peculiarly favorable to piety. But I tell you they are exposed to dangers to which Christians in ordinary life are not exposed: The danger of reading the scriptures critically as scholars and not for edification; danger of formality in prayer, because their duty calls them, rather than a sense of their own need; danger of losing sight of their own individuality as Christians, amidst the various ardent duties of the ministry; danger of pride, of ambition, aspiring to be great, and ambitious for the praise of men. O, my brethren, let us take heed of our own individual piety, that it languish not and die. Take heed to your life, that it be such as becomes the gospel of Christ; take heed that you maintain a propriety of decorum in your intercourse with your people; descend not from your high position; let the company ever feel that a minister of the gospel is in their midst. Some there are who lay aside their clerical character as soon as they descend from the pulpit and laugh and sport and jest, and thus lower themselves in the estimation of the virtuous and good. The apostle gave both to Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 12) and Titus (ii. 15) the exhortation, "Let no man despise thee," i. e. so act that men will have no reason to despise you.

The second part of the admonition is, to take heed of the flock; watch over them with a holy jeal-

ousy—take care with what food they are fed and at what streams they drink—take heed of the strong, that they become not proud in their vain conceits and become like Jeshurun, who waxed fat and kicked and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. Such need taking care of, for they often set themselves against all authority of the church and pastor. Take care of the weak and encourage them, of the wandering and erring, to win them back; of the unstable and wavering, to establish them; of the poor, pass them not by—to the poor especially is the gospel to be preached; of the young, that they may be taught and indoctrinated; of the old, that they may be prepared to die. Pass none by, for the text says, “Take heed to thyself and to *all* the flock, for to this you are appointed by the Holy Ghost.”

And now, brethren, I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his coming, “Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, rebuke, exhort, with all patience and long suffering and doctrine (2 Tim. iv. 2). Make full proof of your ministry. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim. ii. 15). Feed



the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being Lords of God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Peter v. 2-4.)

## THE TERMS OF DISCIPLESHIP.

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TEXT.—If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Math. xvi. 24.

It is of the utmost importance to be a follower of Jesus Christ, to be a true Christian. This enstamps upon us the greatest honor, and is the best eulogy that can be pronounced upon any one. There are very few, trained under religious influences, who have not at times felt a desire and a duty to become Christians. There have been times when their condition as sinners, their eternal destiny, the realities of the world to come, were so forcibly impressed upon their mind and conscience, that they had a realizing sense of their lost condition and were constrained to exclaim, "O that I were indeed a Christian!" Now, to all such the Savior sets forth the conditions and requirements necessary to become Christians.

- I. *A heartfelt desire and willingness—"If any man WILL come after me."*
- II. *Renouncing all self-dependence—"Let him deny himself."*

III. *Dare not be deterred by the difficulties and trials he has to encounter—"Let him take up his cross."*

IV. *He must imitate his example and obey his commandment—"Let him follow me."*

The expression, "It any man will come after me," is very significant. It shows that the terms of discipleship are the same for all classes of men, of every rank and station. There is no difference. The rich and poor, the king and beggar, all come under the same terms and must comply with the same conditions.

Whilst the Savior dwelt upon earth many followed him, literally, from various motives; some from curiosity to see and hear this wonderful person, others were attracted by the miracles he performed, and some, no doubt, from an unrest of soul, a conviction of their lost and perishing condition as sinners. Now, in the text the Savior sets forth the terms under which men can become his followers and true Christians. There are many ways pointed out in our day: An attendance upon external ordinances; an upright and becoming deportment; a certain stereotype routine through which they must pass; high, excited, emotional feelings, &c. In the text we have simple and plain directions to those

who desire to become Christians, and a rule for Christians, by which to prove themselves.

The first requisite is

I. *A heartfelt desire and willingness*—"If any man will come after me." This implies a deliberate choice after due reflection, not from a mere sudden impulse under excited feelings. Many would be Christians, if they could become such in their own way, and could live as they please. They would enjoy the blessedness of the Christian, without complying with the terms of discipleship, without following after Christ. They must take him as their pattern to copy after. For he has left us an example that we should follow his steps (1 Peter ii. 21). Follow him as their teacher, for he says, "Learn of me." (Math. xi. 29.) Follow him as the sheep follow the shepherd: "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me, and I will give them eternal life." (Math. ix. 27.)

Our choice is often determined by the importance of the object presented; by its capability of advancing our interests and happiness; by its reasonableness, commending itself to our understanding and conscience. Now, no one will deny the importance of becoming a Christian, nor that religion will advance our interest, nor that it is reasonable,

and commends itself to our understanding and conscience. If this be the case, why should any hesitate to become followers of Christ? Have they not been invited, urged and entreated again and again by all the considerations which should influence rational beings? Why, O why, withstand the calls of God's word, the influences of the Holy Spirit and the convictions of conscience?

But the Savior desires a willing surrender. He wants no constrained service, no slaves, but volunteers in his service—a heartfelt desire and willingness is required. “If any man will follow me,” says the Master.

II. *Renouncing all self-dependence*—“Let him deny himself.” Self is the greatest hindrance in the way of becoming Christians, and also the greatest enticement to turn back from a Christian course.

There may be many other hindrances—our surroundings in the world, the coldness and indifference of others, the inconsistency of professed Christians; but self and self-indulgence is the great barrier. To gratify self is the chief aim of the natural heart. This must be overcome. The question with us should not be, What do I choose, what will gratify and glorify self? but, What does God require, what will be pleasing to him, tend to his glory and

to our happiness. We must deny self-will, the gratification of every sinful indulgence—every thing we know to be wrong. We must deny dependence upon our own unenlightened reason, our own righteousness, our good works; we must seek the wisdom that is from above and the righteousness which is by the faith of the son of God. “That we be found in him not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” (Phil. iii. 9.)

III. *We must take up the cross.* Taking up the cross is a figurative expression. There is an allusion to persons who were crucified. It was a part of his sentence that the criminal was compelled to carry his cross to the place of execution, enduring the sneers, jests and reproaches of the multitude. Taking up the cross denotes that, if we would become Christians, we must be willing for Christ’s sake to endure every trial and difficulty we shall have to encounter in consequence of it—the opposition, sneers and reproaches of the ungodly. Thus the Savior, in accomplishing the great work of our redemption, though he foreknew all he would have to endure, the shame, obloquy, reproach and agony to which he would be exposed, wavered not. He en-

dured the cross and despised the shame. The most opprobrious epithets were applied to him: The friend of publicans and sinners, a glutton and wine-bibber (Math. xi. 19), a blasphemer (Acts vi. 13), a deceiver. Think of the mockery he endured, amidst his agony on the cross, as the crowd passed by taunting him, wagging their heads and saying, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross," "He saved others, himself he cannot save." All this he endured for us; should any refuse for his sake to take up the cross, to endure reproaches and persecutions? Bearing in mind what he endured for us will enable and dispose us to endure all that may be required of us. Hence the apostle gives the direction to Christians in their conflicts and trials: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb. xii. 2, 3.)

IV. *The last condition of discipleship is, to follow Christ, to imitate his example and carry out his instructions in our daily life.*

Christ not only taught his religion but lived it.

In him it became a living reality. Under all circumstances, in every relation of life, he carried out the spirit, the principles, doctrines and precepts he taught. Only in so far as we are like him in disposition of mind and conduct of life, are we Christians. It must be our chief aim to be holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Like him, we must exercise a forgiving spirit, sympathize with and relieve those that are in distress. According to his example and instructions, we must love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us. (Math. vi. 44.)

The word of God is the only standard by which we are to be governed in our views of religious life and experience. This is the touchstone by which we must test our religious character. Prove yourselves by the terms and requirements of true discipleship laid down in the text by the Master himself. And let the sincere and ardent prayer of every one be

“Be Christ our pattern and our guide,  
His image may we bear;  
O may we tread his holy steps,  
His joy and glory may we share.”



## TRUE SOURCES OF ENJOYMENT.

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TEXT.—Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Prov. v. 15, 16.

God has created us capable of the purest and most exquisite enjoyments—enjoyments which are satisfying, leave no sting behind, occasion no remorse, and are followed by no evil consequences. Not satisfied, however, with such, men seek after the indulgence of pleasures which God has forbidden and which are followed by the most ruinous consequences.

The words of the text, though they have a primary allusion to the purer and holier enjoyments of the family relation, of home, in opposition to those abroad, of dissipation, folly and wickedness, yet admit of a more general application. Pleasures, such as we can enjoy with advantage to all our interests, which are followed by no evil consequences, are compared to full cisterns and running streams of pure water, which are refreshing and satisfying, in contrast with broken cisterns, which disappoint our expectations, and with stagnant pools, whose waters become nauseating, disgusting and engender disease.

Yet how many, instead of seeking to have sources of enjoyment within their own reach, of making home what it ought to be, a pleasant and happy retreat from the cares, perplexities and storms of life, and finding pure enjoyments there, seek them in the vain and delusive pleasures of the world and sin. They rush to places of public amusements, to haunts of iniquity and vice. Instead of seeking to have sources of enjoyment in themselves, in a good conscience, in the love and fear of God, in the paths of virtue and religion, and in doing good to others, they pass by these pure streams and fountains, and seek to slake the thirst and longings of the soul in the stagnant pools of the world and sin.

Under all these circumstances, how important the advice in the text, "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad and rivers of waters in the streets.

True sources of enjoyment is our theme.

- I. *Seek to have within yourselves sources of enjoyment.*
- II. *Seek to have them in your home circle.*
- III. *Seek them in your own church.*
- IV. *Seek them in doing good to others.*

Cisterns, wells and fountains are frequently

made use of in the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament, to represent sources of enjoyment. The appropriateness of these emblems can only be fully realized when we consider the scarcity of water in the eastern countries, where it was necessary for families to have their own wells and cisterns. Those neglecting to have them would have to depend upon others, and go abroad for what they might and ought to have at home.

This is the case with many in our day. They neglect to provide sources of enjoyment in themselves. There is satisfaction and delight in a sense of God's favor and protection in fellowship and communion with him, in confidently reposing our trust in him as our loving Father. This will afford greater pleasure than all the world can give. There is satisfaction and delight in contemplating and dwelling upon the character of our Lord and Savior, his infinite condescension, his ability and willingness to save us; to which, nothing that the world can give bears comparison. Seek, then, the favor of God, which is life, and his loving kindness, which is better than life. Seek to exercise yourself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man. Seek the luxury of doing good to your fellowmen, and; above all, a hope of a better

life; and you need not envy the world their enjoyments. Their's always leave a sting behind, their's will fail them, and fail them in the very time of need. "Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well."

II. *Seek to have sources of enjoyment at home, so that you will have no need to go abroad for them.*

God has instituted the family relation as one of the best means to restrain men from a roving and dissolute life. In the chapter from which our text is taken, he sets forth this his own institution in rivalry with the deceitful and ruinous pleasures of the world and sin.

The trite remark of Cowper, "God made the country, but man made the town," has obtained a world-wide reputation; we would make use of this expression in a more specific sense: God made the home; instituted the family relation, but man made the theatre, the ball-room, dramshop, and all the haunts of vice. Home, if it is as it ought to be, affords a safe, quiet and pleasant retreat from the world-storms which rage without—a place of rest for the weary, a place of pure and rational enjoyment. The joys of home, of the family, are running waters out of our own well. This well is not ex-

posed to every traveller; God has made a wall around it, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joys.

But why is it, that so many, not content with the endearments of home, are almost strangers at their own fireside, except at mealtimes and at night (and not even then at all times), but are roving about, going to and fro, indulging in the sinful, forbidden body- and soul-destroying pleasures of a vain and wicked world? Ah! the reason is, they may have a house to live in, a place at which to stay, but in the true sense of the word they have no home, no attractions there, no congeniality of spirit, no friendly greetings to meet them, no ready hands to minister to their wants. Hence they seek abroad what they can't find at home. This is the case with the young and old. Even with many attractions at home, some young men who have doting parents, fond and affectionate sisters, at eventide leave their homes, roam at large, mix in society, visit places the very mention of which would tinge a sister's cheek with shame, and inflict a sharp pang in a father's and mother's heart. And to their shame be it said, many a husband and father breaks through all the ties which should bind him to his family; instead of drinking waters out of his own cistern and running

waters out of his own well, he seeks to slake the thirst and craving of the soul in forbidden and sinful pleasures. Such will, however, at the end find themselves woefully disappointed, and drink, in shame, remorse, ruin and death.

Make home what it ought to be, the abode of love, peace and affection; gather round thee vining fireside in cheerful conversation, make home attractive, strive to minister to each other's happiness, and above all, let home be hallowed and consecrated by religion, and you will there find pleasures, rational and pure; for

Wisdom and pleasure dwell at home,  
"Retired and silent, seek them there;"  
This is the way to overcome,  
The way to break the tempter's snare.

### III. *Seek to find enjoyment in your own church.*

As every one ought to have an own true family home, so every one ought to have an own church home. Some imagine they can be Christians without attaching themselves to a church; they are like birds of passage, now here, now there. We would not now argue the question, but we have met with but few, if any, who could get along without any church connection. 'Tis true, a mere external church connection, though it may and generally does exert a restraining influence, will not constitute us

Christians. It is necessary for us, that we become real, active, living members of the church, to yield our hearts to Jesus. Then shall we love the house of God, its delightful service, its hymns of praise, its instructions and admonitions, then shall we love

“ Her sweet communions, solemn vows,  
Her hymns of love and praise.”

Nay, we will love the old church home, where our fathers worshipped, where we were confirmed, where from the pastor's lips we received so many lessons of instruction and kind admonitions. When thus we learn to love our own church, we will feel no disposition to wander abroad to seek what we can find at home.

It is, however, the duty of members of the church to further its interests by doing all they can to promote its prosperity, by a holy and consistent walk, by leading others to the house of God, and by our prayers and liberality to sustain it.

One reason why persons are so restless in their church relations is, they look for that in external observances which can only be found in Christ. If the soul rests in Him, it has an all-sufficient good and will be at rest.

IV. *Another source of enjoyment to the Christian is, to do good to others.*

Many professed Christians have never enjoyed the sweet luxury of doing good to their fellowmen. Our religion is not exclusive and selfish. It embraces in our affections all our fellowmen. Pharaoh, the proud monarch of Egypt, said, "My river is my own, I have made it for myself." He sought only his own gratification, regardless of the wants of others. He attributed all he had to his own efforts and employed it to his own gratification. Our text, however, says, "Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad (so that) rivers of waters flow in the streets," that all may drink. We are not to keep the waters of our rivers to ourselves. What would you think of a man who possessed an excellent spring abounding with water, who would plant a hedge around it, and refuse to let his famishing neighbors slake their thirst there? Or what would you think of a man who possessed a medicine of approved efficacy, who kept the secret to himself and would rather see others dying around him, than offer it to them. Such is the character of the man who would not make known the sources of true enjoyment to others, and lead them to them. "Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad," is the exhortation. "Go to work," said a minister of the gospel to a man who was lately awakened and who was looking for some ex-



traordinary tokens of God's grace. "Go to work, live out your religion in your family, in your neighborhood, in your church. Let others see what effect religion has had upon you." The waters of a cistern without constant drawing will loose their freshness. Draw often for yourself and draw for others. Even a worldly business will languish by inactivity and idleness. The more interest a man takes in the church, the more active he is in extending the knowledge of the truth, the more he seeks to benefit others, the more interest he will take in his own salvation, the nearer he will be drawn to God, the more will he kindle love in his own heart, the brighter will be the evidences of divine love in his own soul. Heed the admonition. Seek to have sources of enjoyment within your reach. Exercise yourself to have alive a conscience void of offence both toward God and man. Seek to possess a sense of God's favor, and to delight and trust in Him, and you will have more real satisfaction than all the world's enjoyments can give. Then

"As by the light of op'ning day  
The stars are all concealed,  
So earthly pleasures fade away  
When Jesus is revealed."

Seek to make your home pleasant and attractive.

I don't wonder that some children would rather be any where else than at home; their home has nothing cheerful, nothing inviting, but every thing to repel. They are not met with a cheerful welcome; father and mother treat them coolly, they are not allowed any innocent amusements, nor to have any companions at their home; there are bickerings and contentions. Make home pleasant and attractive, take a part in the conversation and enjoyments of your children, and home will have attractions stronger than any other place. Seek to have a real church-home, attend regularly and take your family with you. There are some restless spirits who are never satisfied, must be ever changing. Thus, some must be moving from one house to another every year; they find fault with one thing and another, and in nine cases out of ten don't better themselves; they don't find every thing according to their wish and have the worry and expense in the bargain; of such Franklin said, "Three removes are as bad as a fire." This is the case with many in their church relations. They are restless spirits, now here now there, and I know very few who have bettered themselves; three removes for them are worse than a fire, for all church love is burned out of their hearts, and at last they go nowhere.

Let the church of your first choice, whither your parents led you in your childhood, where you went to Sabbath-school, where you were baptized, instructed and confirmed, be ever dear to you. It is your spiritual homestead; around it cluster cherished memories of the past, your earliest recollections are associated with it; around its altar your parents, friends and companions partook with you, at your first communion, of the holy supper. The admonitions and prayers of your pastor are often ringing in your ears. Keep true to your first espousals, seek to be a firm and active member, and do all that lies in your power to promote its temporal and spiritual prosperity.

Lastly, seek to do good to others. Open rills and fountains for others to slake their soul's thirst. In imitation of your Savior, go about doing good to the bodies and souls of others, and the approbation of the Master will be yours: "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Math. xxiv. 40.

## FAITH, LOVE AND JOY IN AN UNSEEN SAVIOR.

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TEXT.—Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. 1 Peter i. 8.

There are many who are ready to pass censure upon those who lived in the days of the Savior, who from his own lips heard the words of life and salvation, who were witnesses of his deeds of love and miracles of power, yet did not receive his doctrines nor believe in him; they think that, had they lived in his day, or if the Savior would appear personally, in a visible form, they would receive him as their Savior.

This is not at all likely; human nature is the same and the natural heart is ever at enmity with God. Moreover, we have an attested record of all that Jesus taught and wrought. We have in addition the accumulative evidence of years and centuries of the truth of our holy religion, have seen its effects on individuals and communities, and are therefore without excuse if we reject Jesus and his religion. The persons to whom Peter wrote and to whom he gave the honorable testimony in the

text, had never seen nor heard Jesus; yet they believed in him as firmly, loved him as fervently, rejoiced in him as heartily, as those who had seen and heard him, and much more ought we.

Faith, love and joy are three distinctive traits of Christian character, of genuine piety. To these our text refers, and to them we would direct your attention.

- I. *Faith in an unseen Savior.*
- II. *Love to an unseen Savior.*
- III. *Joy in an unseen Savior.*

There is a great difference between believing Christ and believing on him. The one is merely an assent of the mind to his existence, to the truth of his doctrines, which leaves the heart cold and unfeeling; the other is a trusting of the heart, a reliance upon him for pardon, grace and every needful spiritual blessing—this calms the troubled spirit, this quickens, animates and fills the soul with hope and joy. I do not believe there are any present who doubt whether such a person as Jesus Christ ever lived in the world, who deny the truth of his doctrines, yet there may be many who do not believe on him, with whom there is not that trusting of the heart, that reliance upon him for pardon, grace and every needful blessing, which calms the troubled

spirit, warms, quickens and animates the soul, and fills it with joy and peace. We find by experience that those things which are the objects of our senses are more likely to make an impression upon us, than those which are at a distance, and which are only apprehended by the mind. Hence it is, that the world, with its enjoyments and possessions, charms and ensnares thousands, whilst eternal things, God, Christ, heaven and eternal glory, make so little impression upon men; yet these are by far the more important. This, however, is only because we have no realizing view of the importance and excellences of these spiritual matters. When once there is a realizing view of these things, when there is a right apprehension of Jesus as our Savior, he will be esteemed as the chiefest among ten thousand. When men are fully brought to rely upon him and taste of his pardoning grace, they will be ready to exclaim, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or nakedness or peril or sword?" (Rom. viii. 35.) "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us?"

When men once have a realizing view of their eternal home, every representation of it will fill them with rapture. Is it the city of God? there they

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would dwell. Is it their Father's house? they long to be at home. Is it the abode of the blessed? For such society they long. Is it where, with unclouded vision, they shall behold their Savior? the very thought to see him, whom here unseen they loved and adored, fills them with rapture. The saints, before his advent into the world, through the promises, prophecies and types, though they saw him not, believed in an unseen Savior. Abraham rejoiced to see his day and was glad. Though we see him not, we have sufficient evidence that he is the Christ, the Savior of the world. Now, though seated upon the throne of glory, He is not merely an ideal, but a real personage, as much so as when he was upon the earth; he has lost none of his characteristics as a Savior, none of his power or willingness to save; nay, it was for this very purpose that he ascended to heaven, for it is written, "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sin." (Acts v. 31). Yes,

"Now, though he reigns, exalted high,  
His love is still as great,  
Well he remembers Calvary,  
Nor should his saints forget."

This is a blessed truth, calculated to quicken the faith of believers in an unseen Savior. The faith of

many a desponding Christian has been enkindled anew as he joined in the song:

"The Lord of life with glory crown'd  
On heaven's exalted throne,  
Forgets not those for whom on earth,  
He heaved his dying groan."

- We are ready to trust in an unseen friend, from whom we have received many tokens of his favor, why then distrust an unseen Savior, whose power and willingness to help have been so wonderfully displayed, whose grace and truth have been vouched for by thousands. Moreover, to the Christian, he is never an absent Savior, for faith brings him near; though unseen, he is still near to you, and kindly whispers, "Fear not, I am with thee, be not dismayed, I am thy God." When Thomas, one of the twelve, would not believe the testimony of his brethren, Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen."

The second mark of true piety according to the text is, *Love to an unseen Savior*, whom having not seen ye love. True love to the Savior is founded upon and flows from faith in him. Love is an affection of the heart, called forth by some real or imaginary qualities of the person loved and the capability of that person to render us happy. Now, if



we believe in the character of Jesus Christ as he is revealed in the Scriptures, we will find enough to draw out our heart's best affections towards him. Even in his natural or moral character there is every thing attractive and lovely; there is spotless purity, which could challenge his worst enemies to point out a single blemish; his meekness, manifesting no resentment, but bearing patiently the grossest insults and the most aggravated provocations; his mildness and gentleness towards the afflicted, distressed, and disconsolate, the erring and wandering. Such a disposition, or anything in the least bordering upon it, manifested by any one would have excited the admiration and called forth the heart's warmest affections of all except the wilfully blind or the obstinately wicked. Such a disposition Jesus manifested during his whole life, whilst upon earth; even when you were at enmity with him, with what mildness, gentleness and forbearance has he not met you, ever since you professed to be his? If our hearts are thus affected when we view him in his moral character, how must we not be drawn towards him, when we view and believe in him as the Savior and Redeemer of the world? As mysteriously uniting in one person the divine and human nature, as coming from heaven to save a rebel world, as dying the

just for the unjust to bring us to God? We feel a deep regard for the man who, at the peril of his life, rescues a vessel with its living freight from dashing against the breakers, or, for the man, who, with his lifeboat, braves and buffets the roaring waves to save from impending death a single fellow-mortal. How then should we feel towards Jesus, who made a rich and free provision for the salvation of a world perishing in sin? No wonder, then, that the poet, feeling his heart drawn to the unseen Savior, poured forth the ecstatic emotions which swelled his bosom:

“Though unseen, I love the Savior,  
He almighty grace has shown;  
Pardoned guilt and purchased favor,  
This he makes to mortals known.  
Give him glory,  
Glory, glory is his own.”

If the contemplation of what Jesus has done for a world lying in sin enkindles such feelings, what must they be if we ourselves have been made partakers of his grace? If he has followed us in our wanderings, borne us with patience for years, drawn us from sin and the world to himself, and received us into his favor? Must not this enkindle within us emotions beyond description, when we think of the unseen Savior, whom, not having seen, we love. And, in addition to all this, we shall be drawn nearer

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to him still, our obligations and love to him will be more keenly felt, when we consider what he has engaged to do for his people in the future, viz., to sustain, keep, guard them through life, support them in death, and crown them with glory in the life to come. Assuredly, we are constrained to exclaim, "Whom having not seen, we love."

The next characteristic of piety according to the text is, *Joy in an unseen Savior*. We rejoice in a true and constant friend, from whom we have received many proofs of affectionate regard for us—of whose ability and willingness to help in every time of need, we have abundant testimony from others, assurances and pledges given and attested by his own signature. Now, the fact that we have never seen this friend, will not diminish, but rather increase, our joy, and create longings to meet him, to see him face to face, converse with him and enjoy his society.

Ah! my friends, how many proofs of kind regard have we not received from this unseen Savior! Think of his forbearance, of the drawings of his spirit, of the love he has enkindled in your bosom, of his sufferings endured for you. Consider the testimony of thousands to his ability and willingness to help and save. Dwell upon his assurances, guar-

anted to us, of help in time of need in the future. O! how sweet to the believing soul even the mention of his name! The name Jesus, whispered to the weary and heavy-laden, has raised their desponding spirits. The name whispered to the dying has caused a thrill of joy to fill the soul, amidst the flickerings of life's expiring lamp.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ears;  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fears."

This joy animates the Christian as he wends his way onward in his course heavenward, supports him amid all life's conflicts and trials, and is greatly increased by the hope of seeing this now unseen Savior, of adoring at his throne, of magnifying his grace in the salvation of such a soul as his. In imagination he already beholds the King in his glory, the Lamb upon the throne, the millions of blood-bought souls, whose earthly sighs and groans have been converted into everlasting hallelujahs, and in the rapture of his soul he bursts forth,

"O when shall I see Jesus,  
And be forever blest,  
O when shall I see Jesus,  
And on his bosom rest."

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No wonder this joy is said to be unspeakable, for what tongue can utter it? No wonder it is said to be full of glory, for it is irradiated by the presence of Jesus, and glows with the rays of the light of that city which needs not the light of the sun nor moon, the light whereof is the radiance which encircles and beams from the Lord. My hearer, dost thou believe in Jesus though unseen, dost thou love him and rejoice in him? He is yet the same as when upon earth, and

“Though he reigns exalted high,  
His love is still as great;  
Well he remembers Calvary,  
Nor should his saints forget.”

He ascended to heaven for this purpose, that he might save. He took captivity captive, that he might give gifts to men.

Venture on him, venture humbly yet boldly, ye anxious souls. Strengthen your faith, child of God, by calling to mind what he has already done and what he is pledged to do for you in future. Love him supremely, He is worthy of your love. By contemplation, by prayer, by daily intercourse with him, let your love be kindled into a bright and living flame. Rejoice in him now, rejoice in anticipation of seeing him face to face, and though death rolls

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between, he can and will still its boisterous waves,  
and though its shades shall gather thick around you,  
he can gild the threatening clouds with the bright  
radiance in which he dwells with all his saints.

## HEART MEMORIES.

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**TEXT.**—But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.  
Luke ii. 51.

Man is fearfully and wonderfully made. This conviction forced itself upon the Psalmist when he turned his thoughts upon himself and contemplated his complex nature of body and soul, of his physical and material, and his immaterial and spiritual nature.

The machinery of our body is the most complete and wonderful. The adaptation and harmony of its different parts in maintaining its vitality and accomplishing the purposes designed by its Maker, cannot but fill the reflecting mind with wonder and astonishment. It is, however, also exquisitely and delicately made, so that the slightest accident may in a moment impair or destroy some vital function, and its life be put in jeopardy; hence, we are not only wonderfully but fearfully made. The peculiar and exquisite formation of our body teaches us our frailty, admonishes us of the uncertainty of life and the necessity of preparing for death. The spirit within us, moving, directing and controlling the actions of the body is still more wonderfully and

fearfully made. Invisible in its nature, like to its Creator, it possesses powers and faculties great beyond conception: An understanding grasping and unravelling the secrets of nature and the mysteries of our holy religion, aspirations and desires the most sublime and unbounded, extending into the most distant future, beyond the limits of time, affections the most tender and lasting, a will and determination which yield to no difficulties, a memory in which, as in a store-house, are treasured, and from which are gathered afresh, the events of the past, that we may live o'er again the years that are gone. But as in the case of the body, if the vast powers of the soul are misapplied and misdirected, then the danger is in proportion to their vastness. As in a great machinery, when its moving power is kept under control and directed to its proper end, it will accomplish the design for which it was intended; but when uncontrolled, it will scatter abroad death and ruin. As the breeze blowing in the right direction will fill the sails and waft the vessel to the desired haven, so when that breeze becomes a hurricane and tornado, it will tear the sails to shreds and hurl the vessel upon the breakers, and it becomes a total wreck.

O how many turn the powers of the spirit



within them—those powers given to exalt, ennoble and dignify man—those powers by which he may be assimilated to his God, by which he may be fitted to act well his part in life, and qualified for his high and exalted destiny in the world to come—how many have turned these powers to their own destruction! Oh! the fearful wrecks of souls stranded upon the quicksands and hidden breakers of life, caused by misapplying and misdirecting the vast powers of the soul!

We would, however, at this time direct your attention particularly to but one power of the soul, viz., memory, and this not in its metaphysical aspect, by inquiring into its nature, nor its vast capabilities, but only as to its capability of retaining and calling to mind events and facts of a tender heart and life-affecting character.

*Heart Memories, is the theme to which we would direct your attention.* The mother of Jesus, with an interest and feeling such as only a mother can cherish, treasured up all the sayings of, and concerning her son, not only in the cold store-house of memory, but in the deep recesses of a mother's feeling heart, that they might be cherished there, called to mind and fondly dwelled upon, to cheer her heart, enkindle her faith, dispel her fear, and quicken and

animate her hopes. Thus there may be fond memories of the past, of the most tender and affecting scenes in our childhood life, in our youthful days, and in maturer years, which lie buried in the vast store-house of memory, which we would recall to mind, in the fond hope that, if they have not yet exerted the influence they ought, they may yet by being recalled awaken feelings, desires and aspirations of a salutary character and lead to a better life—a life of devotedness to the Savior.

Among our earliest recollections are those of home: The scenes of our childhood, those halcyon days, when yet we knew no sorrow nor care, when a kind doting mother ministered to our wants, and an affectionate father met us with smiles and dandled us upon his knees. We remember well how before a mother's lap we knelt with folded hands and were taught our infant prayers, and how, sweetly conscious of God's protecting care, we laid us down to sleep—we remember, too, the prayers they taught us: "Our Father, who art in heaven" and "Now I lay me down to sleep." Many feel conscious of the fact, that when from some circumstance or other you omitted your prayers, you felt uneasy and could not sleep, a tender conscience chided you for the neglect. For years the duty of thus looking up to

God as your Father and committing your soul and body to his care was deeply impressed upon your mind. Can you think of these scenes of early childhood without deep emotion? Can you forget those warm and tender hands which folded yours, that soft lap upon which you reclined, the tone of that sweet voice? You may at times forget, but these scenes will occasionally be brought to mind; they are treasured up in the deep recesses of the heart. Recall these scenes, not merely for cherishing the emotions and natural feelings or of shedding a tear on account of them, but that you may profit by them.

Many remember these scenes, but they forget to bend the knee, to fold their hands and raise their hearts to God; they can retire without giving thanks for the blessings of the day, without asking for protection during the night. Was it for this your mother taught you to pray? Can you recall those scenes and rest at ease, whilst you neglect a duty thus early taught? Will you smother those better feelings which still linger and cluster 'round those days of childhood? or will you not rather engage anew in a duty, and enjoy a privilege, which you once held dear and sacred?

Again, who is there that does not call to mind the years of our youth, when we first began to min-

gle with our associates of our school days, where we were surrounded with wicked companions and brought under influences for evil—when the first oath we heard shocked us—when the first untruth told and pertinaciously insisted on made us tremble? Who does not call to remembrance the caution and warning of a dear mother against the seductive pleasures and sinful enjoyments of the world—the the ball-room, theatre, the intoxicating bowl and the card-table—and when at times you were overcome with temptations and strayed from the path of virtue and truth, don't you remember how the trembling, affectionate appeal from father or mother, and from both, "O! my son, my daughter, break not our hearts, bring not our gray hairs with sorrow to the grave"—how their appeals affected you and extorted promises of amendment? You can't forget scenes like these. Like Mary, the mother of our Lord, keep all these sayings in your heart and let them even now be cherished, that they may yet exert their designed influence upon you.

Your parents may be dead; so much the more ought their advice to be cherished. Bring not a reproach upon their character, plant not the thorns and briars of neglect upon their graves, instead of the flowers and evergreens of affection. Said a

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young man when away from home in a large city, as he was urged by some acquaintances to join in something which he knew his father would not approve, "What! do you think I would do anything when my father is not present, which I would not do when he is present?" And, "Sir," said another, whose father was dead, "Do you think I would do anything since my father is dead, which I would not have done while he was living?" Noble sentiments, worthy of all imitation!

Again, deep down in the recesses of the heart linger memories of days gone by, which many would rather smother or obliterate altogether, if possible, which, however, despite all efforts, obtrude upon us and make themselves felt. These are memories of times when the claims of religion, the realities of eternity, were brought home to the heart by the Spirit's influence with such power that we felt our hard hearts melting, our consciences awakened, the sighs of contrition swelling our bosom, and the tears of penitence starting from our eyes. Don't some of you remember such times? You can't help remembering them; you must acknowledge you felt the drawings of the risen and exalted Savior. Memory recalls the vows you then made, the prayers you offered. But with what feelings can you recall those

precious seasons? With pleasure or regret? With pleasure that you were made willing to yield your hearts to him, to consecrate yourselves to his service? Or with regret and shame that you counteracted all these gracious influences, stifled those sighs, stopped the fountain of those tears, hardened your hearts, barred the door against the heavenly visitor suing so earnestly for admission, and are yet strangers to the gospel's pardon and the gospel's hope? Cherish, we pray you, these memories of the past, recall them vividly; they may yet be blessed and cause heart-yearnings after that which you might have possessed and enjoyed long ago, and of which, by the blessing of God, you may yet obtain possession, if you seek aright.

Once more, I can scarcely conceive of a more solemn and affecting scene than to witness the followers of Jesus assembling around the sacramental board. Even in my early childhood, before I could comprehend its design, I felt a solemn awe as I beheld the followers of the Lord encircling the festive board and partake of the sacred emblems; and in after years, when permitted with others to eat of the hidden manna and to drink of the cup of the new covenant in his blood, my first communion, made me feel the solemnity and sacredness of the occas-

ion. We remember, too, with feelings of the deepest interest, the days we spent in the catechetical class—how we united in hymns of praise, bent the knee in prayer for the enlightening and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost—the instructions given by our faithful pastor, the desires enkindled in our hearts, the vows we made to be the Lord's. Can we ever forget those seasons? Their memories fondly linger in our hearts and at times are vividly brought before us. The day of our confirmation, when at God's altar, before a witnessing congregation, we renounced the world and its vanities, Satan and all his works, and promised to be the Lord's—when kneeling at the altar, we seem yet to feel the hands of God's servant placed upon our head and to hear his fervent prayer in our behalf—Ah! these are not the cold memories of the mind, bringing back and dwelling upon mere ordinary events; they are the warm, affecting memories of the heart. What thoughts cluster around these reminiscences? We are all conscious of the fact, but many must acknowledge, that the instructions received were not carried out in the life, that the impressions made have gradually worn off, that the vows have not been paid, that sacramental seasons have been neglected and have lost much of their sacredness

and preciousness. We would have you recall and dwell upon these scenes, that you may live them over again to a better purpose, that the truth may yet be made effectual, that the same feelings and desires may be cherished, your vows be yet paid, that sacramental seasons may become to you more sacred than the mount of transfiguration was to the apostles, so that you will be constrained to exclaim, "Lord, it is good to be here; this shall be our tabernacle, here would we dwell."

Many remember these seasons with heartfelt pleasure, they yet feel their hallowed influences, Jesus is still precious to them, they made a full surrender of themselves to their Lord, and are striving with God's grace to live up to their covenant engagements. How can they forget these sacred scenes? They are as green spots on the barren wastes of the world, upon their pathway through life to the heavenly home. Cherish with profound reverence and gratitude what God has done for you in the past, and let your constant devotedness to Him manifest the sincerity of your Christian profession.

Call to mind the fond memories of the past, the prayers of your childhood, taught by your mother, the affectionate warnings and advice of kind parents,



the instructions of your pastor in the catechetical class, the vows made at your confirmation, your first communion season. You can't afford to live without prayer. You can't afford to disregard all these influences which have been brought to bear upon you. Like the mother of Jesus, keep all these sayings in your hearts.

## RESTRAINING GRACE.

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**TEXT.**—For I also withheld thee from sinning against me.  
Genesis xx. 6.

These words were spoken in a dream of the night by God to Abimelech, King of Gerar, when he had purposed to do a wicked action. It was a sin against a fellow-mortal, but God considered this, like all other sins, as committed against himself, and by threatening and setting forth the wickedness of the action prevented the act and said, "I also have withheld thee from sinning against me."

Abimelech is not the only person whom God in some way or other withholds from sinning against Him. There is a great deal of wickedness in the world, but greatly as iniquity abounds, there would be vastly more if God did not interpose and prevent it—if he did not curb the lawless passions of men, did not take away the opportunity, did not awaken and alarm the conscience of men or in some way or other restrain them.

There is not one here, who, if God had left him entirely to himself, would not have been guilty of many sins and perhaps a whole life of sin,

- I. *To what lengths men might go in sin, if it were not for God's withholding or restraining grace.*
- II. *How God restrains them.*

There is a great deal of sin conceived, thought of, planned and purposed that is never executed. Suppose every evil thought, every unholy imagination; every wicked inclination, every sinful purpose you ever indulged in would have been carried out, to what lengths of wickedness would you have gone? Call to mind those thoughts, inclinations, purposes—their heinousness, their abominations—and you must shudder at the thought to what they might have led you; and what but the restraining grace of God prevented them? If you had been left to yourself, where and what might you now be? Look around you and see the many wretched specimens of humanity, besotted and degraded, the human turned into the brute, yes, lowered beneath the brute. But for the restraining grace, you might be as one of them.

Oh! what is man with a corrupt nature, a heart as depraved as his, not capable of? When placed in favorable circumstances, under strong temptations, cut loose from all restraints, where may he land? The worst of characters that ever lived

never have committed half the crimes or gone to such lengths of wickedness as they might have, had God not restrained them; and God only knows what many of us would have done, if left unhindered to carry out what was in our hearts to do. How many wicked, horrid thoughts have been entertained! how many impure imaginings, how many unchaste desires cherished! which make us tremble to think of and ashamed of ourselves, but which were never carried out and which, if carried out, would have stamped us with infamy. And who has restrained us? Can any one assert that it was done by any natural, moral force or virtuous disposition in ourselves? No; for naturally we do not possess such a virtuous disposition or moral power. We must attribute it to God's withholding grace. Thus David on a certain occasion, when about to visit a certain person, who had greatly insulted him, with condign punishment, but was providentially prevented, exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath kept his servant from evil." Thus we have reason to bless God for his restraining grace. If God did not restrain the ungodly and withhold them from running riot in wickedness, there would scarcely be any sort of living in society, the world would, as in Noah's day, be overrun with wickedness.

But how does God withhold men from sinning? Not by any irresistible power or physical force; this would destroy man's free moral agency and make him a mere machine, not accountable for his actions. He does it by moral agencies, which appeal to his reason and understanding.

*He restrains them by the provisions of civil governments.* The "powers that be" (i. e. the governments) are ordained of God. If it were not for civil government with its laws and the penalties annexed for the violations of law and offices, to inflict the punishments threatened against the transgressor, society could not possibly exist. The fear of these punishments holds many in check. 'Tis true, with all the restraints of law, the most flagrant crimes are committed; thefts, murders, incendiarisms, defrauding by wholesale continue to abound. But if this be so, what would the state of things be without the salutary restraints of law? The fear of detection and punishment deters many and keeps them in check, and this would more effectually be the case, if the laws were more strictly enforced; but there are so many technicalities, so many evasions of the requirements and penalties of the law; this, with the hope of escaping detection, emboldens many in crime; yet, with all this, the law exercises

a powerful restraint upon vice and iniquity. Now, as the powers that be are of God, we must admit that this is one way in which God withholds men from sin and iniquity.

Again, God restrains and withholds men from sin *through the influence of social life*. Unless very depraved, men are not regardless of the opinion of the community in which they live. Their character, their credit, their business and standing in the community are at stake, and this naturally will exert some restraining influence. This influence will be greater or less in proportion to the moral and religious tone of the society in which we live. Society is to a great extent guilty before God for the iniquity that exists. If sin is winked at, it persons guilty of improprieties and wickedness are flattered and welcome and their crimes palliated, they are held up and encouraged in sin.

Now, society was ordained and instituted by God, for mutual good—"He setteth the solitary in families." Psa. lxviii. 6. If it were not for the restraints of social life, many would have torn loose from all restraints and run the rounds of folly and vice.

Again, God withholds others *by providential interference*—by rendering them incapable of carry-

ing out their plans and purposes: Some one has laid out a wicked plan, formed a determination to commit a crime, but God lays him upon a bed of sickness, or some accident befalls him. A certain desperado, with a number of associates, had determined to commit a daring robbery; they were to meet at an appointed time and place, but the cars failed in making their connection and thus their design was frustrated. Another instance is related of a man who had purposed to rob a revenue collector; he lay in wait in a lonely woods, through which the collector was accustomed to pass with a large sum of money in his possession; but, strange to say, the collector by some unaccountable impulse, a certain foreboding of evil, was induced to take another road and the deed could not be carried out. Thus by thwarting their plans and taking away the opportunity God withholds men from sin.

Again, God keeps men from sin *by the restraints of early religious training*. This has a greater influence than we are apt to imagine, but it enters materially into God's plans and purposes. The divine plan is, "Train up a child in the way in which he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." We cannot too highly appreciate our early religious training, the instructions, advice of a pious

father and mother, the prayers they offered for us, how in our childhood they led us to the house of God, how they taught us to reverence the Lord's day, how highly they taught us to prize the word of God. These have made an impression not likely soon to be forgotten; and if, while they were yet living, we were afraid to do anything which we knew would give them pain, would we so disgrace their memory as to do it since they are no more?

God exerts a restraining power *through the church*—by the preaching of the gospel, and all the moral and religious instrumentalities connected with it. Some undervalue the church and its influence upon the morals and life; others are ready to say, "To what purpose is this waste of money to build costly churches and maintain the ordinances of religion?" The same was said when the poor sinner, Magdalene, anointed the blessed Savior's head with costly ointment, although the Savior highly commended the act and said, "Whosoever this gospel shall be preached (this deed made known) through the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done be told for a memorial of her" (proclaimed to her honor). But do you remember who it was that made the remark, "To what purpose is this waste?" It was Judas, the traitor, who sold his Master for



thirty pieces of silver. And all who venture such an assertion, possess the same spirit and would sell their Master and their souls for gain.

What state of things would we have, if there were no churches, no preaching of the gospel, just for a short time? We deplore the degeneracy of the times, with all the churches with their spires pointing to heaven, putting us in mind of another world, where every one shall receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil? Echo answers, What?

God restrains men *through the power of his grace upon their hearts*.—In renewing and sanctifying the heart, in making new creatures of them and then controlling them by his Spirit and Word, they cease to do evil and learn to do good. None of us can conceive how much we owe to God's restraining grace. If it were not for this, what might we have been?

Look back and see how God providentially restrained us from sin—through the influence of social life, by the provisions of civil government, by early religious training, and through the church and its teachings. For these let us thank God, and watch over the risings of temptations and keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

## THE BENEDICTION.

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**TEXT.**—And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee. and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Numbers vi. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26.

From the very beginning of the Christian church it has been the custom to dismiss the congregation with a benediction or blessing. This has been considered by many a mere form, of little significance or importance; hence so little attention is paid when it is pronounced. There is a listlessness, thoughtlessness, yea, even a trifling demeanor, unbecoming the house of God and unbecoming a Christian congregation, a thoughtless gaping around, putting on overcoats, adjusting shawls, as though it were a mere idle ceremony; and for all the good it does, it might as well be dispensed with. And yet, I venture to say, if the minister were to omit it, and merely say, "The service is over, you may now go home," all would be shocked and stand still, afraid to move.

It may be of importance to dwell upon this subject to secure attention to the blessing which is not

only pronounced, but offered, in the name of the Master, to all who are willing to receive and appropriate it to themselves. We propose to consider

- I. *The origin.*
- II. *The design and gracious effects of the benediction.*

Under the Old Testament dispensation, the priests were appointed to instruct and offer sacrifices, but they were also solemnly set apart to bless the people. Thus, we read, Deut. xxi. 5., "And the priests and the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the Lord hath chosen to minister unto him and to bless in the name of the Lord." The blessing was not theirs, it was the Lord's; they were only to offer it in his name. In the text, Aaron and his sons were to bless the people, and God gave them the very words they were to use. The priest was God's mouth to the people, only the instrument through which God imparts the blessing.

It may be well for us to consider the importance of the benediction which Aaron and his sons were to pronounce upon the people. It cannot but strike every attentive reader, that the name Lord is mentioned three times and in each case a special manifestation of God to his people is set forth. Thus: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee." Here

the protection and care of God the Father is promised. "The Lord make his face to shine upon thee." Here the revelation of God and the offer and importance of his grace through Jesus Christ is promised; for it is only through Jesus Christ that God reveals himself (makes his face, his character to shine), and only through him he can be gracious unto us. And again, "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace." Here the illuminating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit are implored; for he takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, and thus gives us peace.

"This formula of benediction," says an ancient author, "already contains the whole mystery of the Trinity and of the redemption which was to be accomplished by it, although only yet to be fully revealed." The Jews themselves admitted that there was some mystery in this benediction which they could not solve, and it is only the reflection of the light of the New Testament which can make it clear.

Bishop Pierson says there was a tradition among the Jews that the priests only blessed the people at the close of the morning, and not of the evening, sacrifice, to show that in the latter days, the days of

Christ, the benediction of the law should cease and that of the New Testament should begin, when in his name the apostles and their successors should bless the people.

We have, as far as I can remember, no special command for ministers to bless the people at the beginning or at the close of each service, nor is there a special form prescribed. Yet the New Testament is full of benedictions. The most of the Epistles begin and end with one; whilst the form varies somewhat, the spirit is the same. In Romans, 1st and 2d Corinthians, and 2d Thessalonians the form is the same: "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This form was generally used by the apostle in the beginning of his epistles. The form generally used at the conclusion of the service is, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." This form of benediction was used by Paul in closing his two epistles to the Corinthians, and has been and is used most generally by ministers of the gospel, because it keeps in view the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and sets forth the appropriate work and influence of each person of the adorable Trinity in our own Christian life, viz.:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.

Another form is simply, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Another is, "Grace, mercy and peace be with you."

It has been the practice from the earliest times of the Christian church to dismiss the congregation with one or the other of these forms. Now, if the official duty of the priests under the old dispensation was to bless the people in God's name, have we no reason to suppose that a similar authority is given to the duly authorized ministers of the New Testament dispensation?

Whether the benedictions of the priests conveyed a real blessing, or only set forth the declarations and purpose of God to bless them, we would not pretend to determine. But what is the character of these benedictions? We cannot agree with those who would invest the ministry with the actual power of conferring the blessings set forth in the benediction. Nor, on the other hand, can we suppose that they merely express a strong desire that their hearers might obtain these blessings. No, it is a setting forth upon divine authority, a virtual offering in the name of the Master of these greatest of all blessings, v.z.: The grace of the Lord Jesus

Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.

It is worthy of remark, that in his epistles the apostle Paul clearly implies that it is not in his individual capacity that he pronounces these benedictions, but in virtue or authority of his office or apostleship. Hence he says, (Rom. i. 1.) "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." Similar expressions he makes use of in his other epistles, and in immediate connection he pronounces the benediction, evidently setting forth that this was done by divine authority.

We do not believe that there is a mysterious, magical virtue in the words or the mere pronouncing them by the minister and that Paul imparted what the words contained. Nor is it a mere fervent wish or prayer. But it is an earnest declaration of the great truths of the gospel, viz.: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, as that which is to be realized in the personal experience of every Christian and also of offering this in the name and by the authority of God himself. Now, God does not only set forth and offer these blessings, but also really bestows them upon those who by faith in Jesus

Christ appropriate them to themselves. It is an assurance which God gives to his believing children to strengthen their faith, to comfort and encourage their hearts; a gracious offer he makes through his appointed ambassadors to all who will accept of this grace which is in Christ Jesus. It is peculiarly appropriate that the benediction should be pronounced at the conclusion of each service. It, as it were, stamps God's seal of approbation, his amen, upon the truth taught, impresses the minds of the hearers with the importance of realizing the blessings which God offers and really bestows on his people.

It used to be the custom among the fathers in our Lutheran Church to commence with a benediction. The minister, standing at the altar, would raise his hands over the people and say, "The Lord be with you," and the congregation would reverently respond, "And with thy spirit." This was designed to solemnize and prepare the people to hear and receive the word. This practice, at least in spirit, still prevails amongst us in the invocation, "The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him." Or, "Let the words of my mouth or the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer." Brethren, this is not a mere formal ceremony; it has



the sanction of the Almighty under the old dispensation, it has the sanction of the example of Jesus. When he was about leaving his disciples and when they were sorely troubled, he pronounced a benediction upon them: "Peace, I leave with you my peace; I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This he gave them not only as individuals, but as apostles, as representatives of their followers in the ministerial office; for it was declared in connection with the sending of the Holy Ghost, whom the Father would send unto them, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." It is also worthy of note, that the very last thing which he did upon earth, as he ascended from Bethany, was, he lifted up his hands over them and blessed them.

This custom has the sanction of all the apostolic writings also, and has remained in the church from the beginning to the present day. If, then, the benediction has such sanctions, if it is pronounced in the name of the Master, in the very language which the Holy Ghost gave them,—if it sets forth

the blessings God offers and is ready to bestow (for God offers nothing, which he is not willing and ready to give), is it right, is it becoming, to treat its announcement with so little regard, nay, with thoughtlessness and irreverence, and thus deprive ourselves of the blessings which God, not the minister, offers? We all need the grace of the Lord Jesus, we all need the communion of the Holy Ghost. A conscientious regard to it, as it is declared from Sunday to Sunday, may awaken and strengthen an ardent desire after the blessings offered in the name of the Master; it may call forth not only a longing after them, but a seeking to appropriate them by faith to ourselves, and thus strengthen our faith and cheer and encourage our hearts, as God assures us that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost are ours.

Take heed, then, how ye treat the kindly greeting of the Lord. Reverently, devoutly, hear and take home with you the blessing pronounced; ponder over it, see what is offered and, if received in trust and confidence, is also bestowed. See to it, that the grace of the Lord Jesus may dwell in you, fill and possess your hearts and direct your lives—

that the love of God may animate and quicken you,  
and that the enlightening, sanctifying, directing,  
comforting influence of the Holy Spirit may fit you  
to live the life and die the death of the Christian.

## STREET TRAINING, OR THE DEVIL'S FREE-SCHOOL.

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**TEXT.**—Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. Prov. iv. 14, 15.

The great problem of our day is, how can the rising generation be saved from the seductive influences with which they are surrounded, rescued from degradation, shame and ruin, and be qualified to act well their part in life? This is a question which claims the attention of the patriot, statesman, philanthropist and Christian.

Upon the moral and religious training of the young (especially the young men) depends the prosperity of the country, the condition of social life, and the future character of the church. Let the young be borne along on the mighty tide of immorality and vice which is sweeping over the land like a flood, and it requires not the keenness of prophetic vision to foretell the result. The character of the present rising generation will stamp its impress upon, mould and shape the character of that which will follow. There are dangers before us, and we

will do well to meet them fairly, and try to avert them.

The Scriptures lay a great stress upon the early training of the young: Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, is the injunction of Solomon. This training does not refer so much to intellectual, moral and religious instruction, as to keep them in subjection, to train them to habits of life, to curb the bias and inclinations of their corrupt hearts, to keep them from evil associations and influences. There is a great deal of instruction, but there is too little training. Children are allowed to take their own course, to form associates which will counteract and more than counteract all the influences of instruction. Training is the great want of our day. This is what Solomon mainly insists upon. In the text this is his warning: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not even by it, turn away from it, and pass away."

It would appear that already in Solomon's day there were snares and enticements which met young men on every side, for he warns, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." "Come thou with us," was the cry of the idle, standing at the

corners and running along the streets. Is not this the case in our day? It would seem as though the representation of the wise man of the state and condition of things in his day was prophetic and had its fulfillment in our day.

*Street Training, or the Devil's Free-School,* is our subject. That there is a lamentable want of the right training in our day, is apparent to the most superficial observer. You meet the young of all ages, from the child of ten to those of riper years, on our streets in groups, standing at the corners, making use of unbecoming, indecent language, uttering the most horrid oaths, and this sometimes until the midnight, and even the morning hour. Others gather in places of a most suspicious character, under cover of darkness, where they would be ashamed to be seen by their parents or any respectable persons. And what training do they get and what do they learn? A training to fit and qualify them for every evil work, to deeds of rapine and murder, deeds the very mention of which once caused them to shudder and tremble like an aspen leaf. Many young in years are old and adepts in crime. Such is street training. It is the devil's free-school. Many have been taught and graduated in this school, and have had their diplomas signed

by the judge of the criminal court, or by the death warrant of the governor. Look around, and you will find many young men once the pride of doting parents, young men of bright intellects, of fairest prospects in life, complete wrecks of humanity, outcasts of society, with broken down constitutions, blasted characters, the very pests of society, ever watchful to lead others, especially the unwary, astray. We often hear of object teaching in our schools through the senses, by what we see, hear or come in contact with. This is principally the mode of teaching in this school. There is everything to captivate the eye, charm the ear and excite the passions. These objects meet you at every step, and they are living, moving, speaking objects. Flaming signs creak in the breeze to attract attention; places of vile report, with music to entice—club-rooms, splendidly furnished, lure the passers by. Perhaps, too, as in the days of solomon, the harlot may be passing on the street, standing at the corners, “in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, lying in wait to ensnare.” (Prov. vii. 9.) O my friends, is there no danger in street training, in this devil’s free-school?

We must, however, by no means suppose that in this school they have no text-books—Satan is too

wily for this. There are books for the primary and for the more advanced classes. There are juvenile books, with objectionable, yea, even obscene, pictures; thus early familiarizing children with crime. Then we have every year new series of novels, depicting love scenes, elopements, clandestine marriages, murders, &c., thus giving wrong views of human life, unfitting them for its sober realities.

For the more advanced classes, there are works on infidelity; not so much bold, daring and blasphemous infidelity—this would startle and alarm, and defeat the object intended; but subtle and disguised insinuations, creating doubts as to the divinity of the Scriptures, making light of and ridiculing religion, the institutions of the church, the Sabbath and public worship; and many are ensnared and led astray.

Once more, the secular press, I would not say intentionally, yet nevertheless really, to some extent exerts a very bad influence upon the young. You find there a minute detail of the manner in which men of high standing in life have swindled others of thousands and tens of thousands, who when tried are not convicted, and cut as great a figure in the community as ever. We have accounts of murders the most brutal, of robberies the most daring, the



way and manner in which they were committed, all detailed step by step, thus instructing others how they might do the same.

This school is free and open for all, and hundreds and thousands in our cities and towns are educated in them, and though parents may not send their children, yet, like Eli, who knew that his sons made themselves vile, yet restrained them not, so many parents know where their children are, and where they spend days and nights ruining themselves, yet restrain them not. We have seen the evils of street training. The question arises, How can we counteract, if not eradicate, the evil? Some, ignoring God's plan of constant, persistent, early moral and religious training, have resorted to legal enactments, others to mere intellectual culture, but both have failed. They don't reach the root of the matter. Legal enactments can only reach open violations of law, and intellectual training only cultivates the mind, whilst the feelings, desires and passions remain uncurbed and are ready to break forth at the least provocation. The training of the moral sense must keep pace with intellectual culture.

The Scripture mode is the only approved method of training the rising generation. "Bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

This is also in accordance with reason and experience. Early impressions are permanent, and early habits are strongest. One great remedy is to be sought in the family, the home. There the habits and characters are formed. If parents restrain not their children, keep them not under control, give them a loose reign, if they do not care where they go and spend their time, nor what associates they choose, is it any wonder that they grow wild, and that parents complain that they have no control over them? it is their own fault. They did not begin early enough, were not firm in insisting upon obedience, and are now reaping the natural consequences of their own neglect of duty. Some maintain, the young must have their pleasure, must sow their wild oats; they will get wiser as they grow older. But the scriptures teach, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap." If they sow wild oats, wild oats will they reap.

I consider the church as an important means for the right training of the young. If parents would take their children by the hands, and take them with them to the house of God on each Lord's day, the doctrines of our holy religion would be impressed upon their minds, its precepts would be taught and enforced, their obligations to God would

be set before them, the love of Jesus in dying for them portrayed in such a manner that, with the influences of the Holy Ghost, they would be kept from evil and led into the paths of righteousness.

The Sunday-School is an important auxiliary in the right training of the young, and parents should see to it, that their children attend regularly. Members of the church should use their influence to bring as many as they can into the school. Some young persons imagine they are getting too old to go, and cut themselves loose from all its salutary influences, and parents often entertain the same opinion, and permit them to stay away. Let parents bear in mind the devil's free-school is also open on Sunday, and if they don't go to their own school, they may go to his. They ought to use their God-given authority to urge and command them to go. For this God commended Abraham. "I know him, that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. Gen. xviii. 19.

And now in conclusion, permit me to address a few words of counsel to the young, especially the young men.

To a great extent young men have their destiny in their own hands. They will be what they make of themselves—they are the arbiters of their own fortune. They are forming characters for good or evil. Character is better than capital. Idleness leads to sin and vice. The community looks with suspicion upon the idle, especially upon those who lounge at the corners of the streets, and those who have no respect for themselves, cannot expect to be respected by others.

Many young men, who had every advantage to prosper in the world, of good parentage, of education and of means, have ruined themselves before they arrived at maturity. Others from the humbler walks of life, without any family renown, without means, have risen from a state of indigence to competency, respect and position in society. Each of these classes are reaping what they have sown.

The question presents itself with peculiar significance in our day, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and the only satisfactory answer which can be given, is that of the Psalmist, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Make the word of God your guide. Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly, stand not in the way of sinners, and sit not in the seat of the scornful.—Associate with

the virtuous and good, avoid idleness, (Idleness is the devil's workshop, says an old proverb.) Be engaged in some honorable calling, and you won't have time to attend to the temptations with which you may be beset. Luther on a certain occasion, when fiercely assaulted by Satan, cried out, "get thee behind me, Satan, I have no time to listen to thee." Let parents attend to the early training of their children, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

## THE SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH.

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**TEXT.**—And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. Isa. lxx. 24.

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We live in a remarkable age, discoveries have been made, inventions have been devised of the most extraordinary character—which if any one had foretold, they would have been thought incredible. If the men of bygone years were permitted to return to this world, they would gaze around in amazement, and imagine they were in some fairy-land, some place of enchantment.

In the days of the fathers, every thing was accomplished by the slow progress of manual labor and physical strength, now a few men with the aid of machinery, accomplish the work of hundreds in a short time which in olden times required months and years.

The very elements of nature are brought under man's control.

We have harnessed steam to our vessels and cars, and control it at pleasure.

We light our cities and dwellings with air. We constitute the lightning our letter carrier.

We make the sunlight to paint our likenesses

Oh ! If there were the same developments in Christian life, activity and enterprise ! If all the means, influence and powers at the command of the followers of Christ, were concentrated in the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom ! What mighty triumphs would they not achieve through the enlightening, sanctifying, vitalizing and energizing influence of the Holy Ghost ?

Then would the word of the Lord have free course and be glorified, then the wilderness and the solitary places would be glad and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. Then, literally, nations would be born to God in a day. Of all the discoveries of the age the magnetic Telegraph is one of the most wonderful. In the race with time and space, carrying off the victory. Scorning every obstacle. It dives through oceans with lightnings speed, it appears almost incredible and would be, did the accomplished facts not fully prove it.

But, brethren, there is still another mode of communication, by which our thoughts, and desires and requests can be sent swifter than lightning speed, and shall be answered ere they are uttered. For

thus saith the text, "and it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer and while they are yet speaking I will hear." This is God's telegraph. It reaches from earth to God's mercy seat in Heaven.

*The Spiritual Telegraph* is our subject.

This is nothing new. It has been in existence from time immemorial and has been tried by God's people in every age. It is incorporated in God's covenant of grace, with his people and forms a part of it. It enables us to hold converse with the Almighty, the framer of our bodies, the Father of our spirits and the God of our salvation. Let us institute a comparison between the ordinary and spiritual telegraph. In the ordinary telegraph office only one can be attended to at a time, each must wait his turn. But at this telegraph office, thousands and millions can be attended to at the same time. By the spiritual telegraph countless messages are always on the wing upward, and their answers meet them on their downward flight. A little girl who had heard some persons speaking of the telegraph, one evening, after she had said her prayers, asked her mother, "Mother, can God hear all the prayers that are made, at the same time?" "Yes, my child!" The little one innocently, but significantly replied. "Then I guess God must have a telegraph in every house." Would



to God, there were in every family and from every heart a telegraph from which messages of supplication, prayer, intercessions and thanksgivings were daily sent to a throne of grace. Again there is no need of wires, nor battery, nor machinery required by this telegraph, all that is necessary is a sincere, upright heart, kindled with ardent longings after that, which you ask for, and your message flies upon the very air of heaven, and reaches the ears of Him, who constantly sits at the other end of the circuit. Neither need we go to this or that place where there is an office, but from every place, wherever you are, in the lonely desert, on the boisterous ocean, on the sterile mountain top, at home or abroad and alone or in company, in sickness or in health, in every place and under all circumstances you can send your message.

Again, there is nothing to pay, it is open and free to all—without money and without price. The communication is also more speedy, not only in reaching its destination but also in receiving an answer. In the ordinary telegraph the operator is not always in direct communication with the place to which the message is sent; sometimes he is absent, or the person to whom it is sent lives at some distance and a message must be dispatched to him, by a

carrier. All this occasions delay. None of these things however can delay our messages on the spiritual telegraph, nor retard the answer. The pious soul through Jesus Christ, is always in direct communication with God and God with the soul. He is never absent from the throne of grace—and we can never be at a place where his answer cannot reach us.

It is of great advantage to the man of business to have a speedy communication with the places and the men with whom he is connected in business and trade.

Equally necessary, and even more so, is it for persons, whose highest interests lie in the heavenly world, whose God and Saviour, whose heavenly home is there, to have a speedy and direct communication. How desirable, for the poor, needy, helpless, awakened soul, to have at all times a free access to a throne of Grace !

How comforting and encouraging for the Christian to have a free, access to his God and Saviour, to tell his tale of woe—to send his anxieties, cares, fears and weaknesses upon this mysterious spiritual telegraph with which God and his soul have been put in connection, and to know that even before the words are uttered, whilst the desires are enkindling

in the soul—they have already been heard above, and that the answer, is already on the way. Oh! how cheering how enrapturing the thought—and is it not so? Is this merely fancy—merely a dream? or are they the wild, senseless illusion of fanaticism? If even it were a dream, I would say don't awaken me, for it is the most pleasant of dreams. But is not this reality? Does not God himself say, "It shall come to pass. that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

But of what use is the ordinary telegraph, to the man of business, if not employed by him. It is not enough to think of it, and to be astonished at its operation. To be of any advantage it must be employed. Thus, for example, if a man of business, has any transactions with a man at a distance which must be attended to in a certain time, at the risk of some great loss, of what use is the telegraph, if because of indifference, negligence, trouble or expense, he will not send his message? Or if in case, any one in the family is lying very ill and desires to see some member of the household, who lives at a distance? Or in case of a death in the household we want to give notice of the time of the funeral to those afar off. Of what use this extraordinary mode of communication if it is not resorted to?

So, of what use this spiritual telegraph, if we do not under all the varied circumstances in life resort to it, and make it available. The atonement of Jesus Christ, has opened a free communication between heaven and earth—between God and the soul. This is the wire upon which our desires can speed their way to a throne of grace. Faith is the electricity by which the messages are elicited from our hearts and speeded onward and upward to their destination. For whatsoever we shall ask in faith and in the name and for the sake of Jesus, shall be given unto us. Try then this telegraph—try it daily—try it in your temporal troubles—try it in soul troubles and anxieties—try it amidst bereavements of dear ones. Try it when burdened with a sense of guilt, send up your petition to the Lord and He will have mercy and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Try it, ye children of God, in discouragements, trials and temptations, His promise is “My Grace shall be sufficient for you.”

You need not be afraid because of the distance, “for our God is not a God afar off, but nigh at hand, ready to help and mighty to save.” You need not be afraid of the expense, for the invitation is free. “Ho ! *every one* that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and

eat, come buy wine and milk without money and without price."

What an unspeakable privilege ! how ought not all to value, and improve it and keep up a constant communication with their God.

It is a shame for a child not to keep up a correspondence with a kind and affectionate Father, or for a friend not to keep up a communication with his benefactors. How much greater the shame for those dependent upon God, not to hold constant intercourse with Him Whilst we thank God that we have a free and constant access to a throne of grace, let us in "every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make known our requests to God."

## GOD'S INSURANCE COMPANY.

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TEXT.—When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel thy Saviour. Isa. xliii. 2, 3. \*

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We live in remarkable times, dangers lurk around us on all sides. There have not for a long time, been chronicled such remarkable devastations by fire, as at the present time. There have been large and destructive conflagrations in the forests, destroying millions of property. In the cities, sweeping away as with the besom of destruction extensive manufactories, throwing out of employ thousands of laborers. Villages and towns in the interior of our country, hitherto thought comparatively safe, have been almost totally devastated. We have read with feelings of fear and sympathy, the great calamity which has befallen Milton. The accounts given

\* This sermon was preached immediately after the great conflagration at Milton, and the subject was suggested by that terrible calamity.

were appalling, and eye-witnesses have said, the half was not told us.

York has been wonderfully spared, for which we should gratefully acknowledge the gracious interference of a kind Providence, for it certainly was not because we are better than others. These calamities have arrested the attention of the most thoughtless and careless, and filled the minds of all with apprehension. An alarm of our fire bells a few nights after Milton's destruction, like an electric shock, thrilled our whole community, and when a short time after, another alarm was sounded, the people were terror-stricken, as the fate of Milton was vividly called to mind,—fearful, a similar fate might be ours. But thanks to a kind Providence, which controls the elements, and to our effective firemen, we were saved from an extensive conflagration.

Brethren, like as the busy bee extracts honey from the bitter and even poisonous flowers, so should we learn to improve and learn the lessons which these untoward circumstances teach us.

It would seem as though God intended to cultivate and call into lively exercise the sympathies of our hearts in behalf of our distressed and suffering fellow men. And never has there been a more im-

mediate and generous a response to the recommendation of the Executive of the State and the calls of the authorities of our different towns. These fires should make us more careful in the construction of buildings, so as to render them less liable to the ravages of fire, and should make all more careful in their own dwellings.

In reading over the list of the sufferers, almost the first inquiry was, were they insured and for how much? What a searching for, and examination of policies there no doubt was, what a chagrin with those who had neglected to procure an insurance and what selfcongratulation with those who had.

We have in our day insurance companies of various kinds, life insurance companies, travellers insurance companies, against injuries sustained by travelers on railroads, against perils on the mighty deep, against losses by fire. We have nothing to say against these institutions when legitimately carried on. It has often been of great importance for the widow and her children, if the husband had his life insured for a certain amount, or for a son to insure his life for the benefit of his aged parents. But for life-speculators, to hunt up old decrepit persons, who are upon the very brink of the grave or old toppers who have undermined their health and for



the paltry sum of a few dollars, to get their consent to insure their lives, and then go about the streets to sell these policies, is reprehensible in the extreme, low, mean, despicable, of which every decent man ought to be ashamed.

There is in reality no such thing as insuring your life. No company can insure your life for a single day. All they can do is in the event of your death to guarantee to your family a certain amount of money. A simple minded man once entered the office of a life insurance company and asked, do you insure a man's life here? when answered, "Yes, for how much do you want to be insured"? "For how much? I don't know what you mean, I want to have my life insured for five years, that's about as much longer as I want to live." "We can't do that," was the reply, "we can only insure you so much money when you die." "Then I'll not insure, for it wont help me any when I am dead." If a man's life could be insured for a few years, many would pay a large premium.

The ordinary insurance companies are not always safe. The risks they take are so many and large, the losses by death, fire and accidents are so great and their investments so precarious that they

are often unable with the best intentions, to meet their liabilities.

There is however an insurance company of a general character, meeting every possible case, which cannot possibly fail, its resources are adequate for any emergency.

This is God's insurance company. The policy is contained in the text. To secure confidence it is prefaced with "Thus saith the Lord," and has his endorsement "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel."

This is of a general character, meeting every danger on our journey through life.

We are surrounded by perils at every step we take, dangers lurk around on every side, which we can neither prevent, nor sustain ourselves under them. Against these we need protection, under them we need a sustaining influence. And where can we find this but with Him who has given us the promise that He will be with His people at all times, that His grace shall be sufficient for them, that He will be with them in six trials and in the seventh (greatest) He will not forsake them.

This insurance is guaranteed against perils by water.

"When thou passeth through the waters, I will

be with thee." Perhaps there may be an allusion in the text to the flood, in Noah's day, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, when God so miraculously delivered and saved Noah and his family. Noah was insured in God's insurance company, against the ravages of the flood, in God's own way. God will always find or make a way to rescue his people.

This insurance is guaranteed against fire "When thou passeth through the fire thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Allusion may be had here to the destruction of Sodom from which God so wonderfully delivered Lot and his family, or reference may be had to the three Hebrew youths, whom Nebuchadnezzar had thrown into the fiery furnace, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither was there the smell of fire upon their garments. Our text contains a general prophetic prospective promise to Israel for the future. That whenever and wheresoever they would come into the greatest straits and difficulties, God would protect and deliver them.

The assurance in the text, though primarily given to Israel of old, yet need not be restricted

to them. It holds good in our day to all God's people, for it is written (2nd Tim. iii. 16,) "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Again, the Apostle, (1st Cor. x. 11,) says, "All these things happened to them, for examples; and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come." God cares for his people now, as much as he did for His people in times past. His promise has not been weakened by the lapse of ages, it is recorded for us, nor have his relations and his mind undergone any change, or his ability to help been curtailed.

Again, other insurance companies through the lapse of years have failed, and their policies may not be worth the paper they are written upon. God's policy cannot fail, you can present it at his banking house, assured that it will be honored, at its full value, without the reduction of any percentage.

We know indeed, that we cannot take the words in the bare literal sense, that God will always deliver his people from dangers and perils, by water, and yet he has done this; instance the case of the disciples on the sea of Gallilee, the apostle and his associates in the shipwreck. In modern times, hundreds have been saved in cases, where there was

no human probability of deliverance. Though God does not always rescue from the dangers which beset his people, yet He will in all cases, uphold, sustain and comfort them, fulfilling his promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." He sustained the martyrs at the scaffold and the stake, and will sustain his people amidst their severest trials, and though their bodies may perish, He will deliver and save their souls, and the consolations of the gospel which are neither few nor small, will, abundantly be ministered unto His people.

In ordinary insurance companies, men have to pay in proportion to the amount insured. God's insurance is free, without money and without price, its provisions are rich and free the world over, and general as to all our wants. Yet there are conditions annexed. If we would claim the fulfillment of the promises, we must sustain the character of those to whom they are given. Some there are, who exercise a presumptuous trust in God, and apply all the promises to themselves, whilst some are only given to the children of God; on the other hand, fearful and desponding christians rob themselves of the supporting and cheering influences of promises, which are expressly intended for them. The Saviour gives us an unfailing antidote against all corroding cares,

and fearful apprehensions, (Jno. xiv. 1.) "Let not your heart be troubled," believe in, trust and submit yourselves to God as the God of Providence, in whose hands are the destinies of men, who watches over you, who can overrule all that may happen to you for your good. The Saviour however adds, Believe also in Me as the God of grace and salvation. Trust and submit your soul's concerns to Him, who has died for you, who is able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come to him. Thus we can be assured of his favor and protection in life and in death. How important to secure this.

Some, have intended, and resolved to have their lives and property insured, in the ordinary insurance company, yet put it off from time to time, but delayed too long, death overtook them e're it was done. So, many have resolved to become christians, to seek an interest in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but have delayed it from time to time, and have been hurried into eternity unprepared.

Professions, resolutions, external observances, will not avail. It is Goldliness which has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. The Saviour says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom

of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Hearer, have you an insurance in God's life insurance company? If not, secure it without delay. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

Christians, examine your policies, whether they agree with the requirements of the word of God, "That you be found in Christ Jesus, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, (Phil. iii. 9.)" Thus you shall be safe through life, and in death, and be heirs of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled and fadeth not away.

## THE TEACHINGS OF NATURE.

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### HARVEST SERMON.

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TEXT.—O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all, the earth is full of thy riches.—Psalm civ. 42.

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It is pleasing and profitable to contemplate and study the works of God in nature.

This was a work the Psalmist, often engaged and delighted in. At eventide he loved to gaze at the star-spangled heavens, and as he gazed, he was constrained to exclaim, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work."

His meditations were however not confined to the heavens, but extended to all the works of God in nature.

Nature is a vast book, upon every leaf of which God has deeply and indelibly, inscribed His greatness, wisdom and goodness. Yet this book, like the Bible, is to many a sealed book. With its pages continually open before them, they pass along without seeing, and acknowledging the power, wisdom



and goodness of God, inscribed upon the works of his hand.

We would direct your attention to the important lessons, taught us when we contemplate the works of God, so that with the Psalmist, we may with reverence be constrained to exclaim, "How manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all, the earth is full of thy glory."

The works of God teach us,

- I. *His greatness.*
- II. *His wisdom.*
- III. *His goodness.*

This Psalm contains some of the most sublime representations of the greatness, and majesty of the Almighty the human mind can conceive of.

He is represented as clothing himself with light as with a garment; as stretching out the heavens as a curtain; as making the clouds his chariot; as walking upon the wings of the wind; as having laid the foundations of the earth upon the waters; as setting bounds to the mighty deep; as speaking through the voice of his thunder; as planting the mighty cedars of Lebanon so deep, that they can not be moved; as watering the hills from his cloud chambers; as clothing the mountains and vallies with food for man and beast.

Can any representation of the majesty and greatness of God be more sublime, and better calculated to fill us with reverence and awe? and yet how few think of these things. They are surrounded on all sides, with the wonderful works and doings of God, and yet never raise their thoughts and hearts to the great Creator. This was not the case with David, when he thought and meditated upon these things, he was overpowered with the thought, and broke forth in the words of the text, "O Lord, how wonderful are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all, the earth is full of thy riches."

The great of this world, seek to display their glory and gain renown, by the splendor and costliness of their apparel, with which they adorn themselves. But David said of God, "Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, Thou coverest Thyself with light as a garment." Kings and nobles of the earth, exhibit their greatness by the splendor and gorgeousness of their thrones and palaces. But God stretches out the heavens as a curtain, a tent or palace to dwell in, and lights it up with the effulgence of his own glory. Kings and the great of the earth, seek notoriety by the costliness of their equipage, their carriages, with their costly coat of arms, the gilded trappings of their prancing horses. But God makes

the clouds his chariot, and the winds of heaven his steeds.”

The great of the earth magnify themselves, by the number of their liveried attendants. But God makes myriads of angels his attendants, and flaming fire, his ministers. Kings and princes are feared and honored by the power they wield. But what power is equal to that of God ? He but looketh upon the earth, and it trembles, He but touches the hills and they smoke. All the elements of nature stand ready to do his bidding. He speaks and it is done, He commandeth and it standeth fast. The lightning scathes at his bidding, at His nod, the windows of heaven are opened, and the fountains of the deep, pour forth their devastating floods. Storms arise, and are stilled at his word.

Who must not be penetrated with a pervading sense of the majesty and greatness of God ? Who should not stand in awe of, and fear Him ? Who can withstand, set at naught and defy his power ? Who can fear and tremble, when he has this mighty God for his friend and defence ?

*Again, the works of God exhibit, teach us wisdom.* This is clearly set forth in the text. How manifold are thy works ? “In wisdom hast thou made them all.”

In examining an intricate piece of mechanism, with its complication of wheels and springs, all so fitted together as to bring about the desired effect, we are led to acknowledge the ingenuity and wisdom of the maker. How much more must we acknowledge the wisdom of God, in the creation and controlling the system of worlds, as they are made to roll through the immensity of space, with inconceivable velocity, each in its own appointed sphere, one ballancing the other, nor has one ever swerved from its orbit.

See how the seasons, follow in regular succession, seed time and harvest, day and night, have never yet failed. Look at the productive power of the earth, that it brings forth seed to the sower and bread for the eater. Look at the wisdom of God in imparting to the seed a life-germ, to bring forth its own kind and to multiply itself some thirty, some sixty and some an hundred fold. The fact that the seed sown, should decay and then reproduce itself is a profound mystery to us. But suppose a single seed should only reproduce itself, and bring no more than was sown, of what avail would that be ? But that it produces so abundantly, sets forth the wisdom of our God. Behold the wisdom of God in creating the sun, as a store-house of light and warmth, to light up the

world, and call forth vegetation. Throughout all nature we behold the wisdom of God, all things are wisely ordered to bring about his gracious designs, to minister to the wants and happiness of his creatures.

The wisdom of God is seen in surrounding us with the life-preserving air we breathe, in brewing and purifying the refreshing water in the deep recesses of the earth, and causing it to gush forth to quench the thirst of man and beast. He has salted the ocean that it may not become foul, He has formed coal in the bowels of the earth, and fountains of oil in the deep, and these lay concealed for centuries from the knowledge of men, until when most needed the attention of men was directed to them, and apparently by accident they were discovered.

No wonder the Psalmist, in view of all the works of God exclaimed, "How wonderful are thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all." These things are wonderful in our eyes and we are constrained to exclaim, "O the height and depth, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

If such be the wisdom of God, displayed in the works of nature, surely we should submit ourselves to his guidance and direction, to acknowledge Him

in all his ways, and seek to be guided by the direction of his word and the influences of his spirit.

We consider lastly.

*The goodness of God displayed in the works of nature.*

The text says, "The earth is full of thy riches," or as it may be rendered, full of thy goodness. The earth is the rich and full store-house of the Almighty, from which with a liberal hand, he distributes his bounty to all his creatures. The whole arrangement of the world, renders it an appropriate dwelling place for man. He has not placed us in a vast dreary waste, with no green spots to cheer us, no trees or flowers to enliven and beautify the scene, nor in a lonely island, far away and separated from our fellowmen, nor in a barren soil, which yields but a poor and scanty reward to our toil and labor, but He has placed us in a garden of his own planting, with grass-covered hills and vallies, with fields of waving grain, with everything in abundance, not only for our wants, but for our enjoyment. This year again, has God blessed us with an abundant harvest and filled our barns with plenty, surely, "The earth is full of the riches of his goodness."

Our harvests come so regularly, that we con-

sider it as a matter of course, that it could not be otherwise.

Have you ever thought of the danger, to which your crops are exposed, and how whilst you sleep, God watches over them to guard them from harm, and causes them to grow.

The early frosts of fall and the late frosts of spring, or the fierce colds of winter may blast them, the burning heat of summer may scorch, the rust or mildew may blight them, the crushing hailstorm may cut them down, the devastating flood may sweep them away, the grasshopper and locusts may devour them. From all these, God has marvellously protected our growing and ripening crops.

One, or several of these might have blasted all the hopes of the husbandman. Who watched over your crops? who spread his blanket of snow over them, to protect them from the piercing cold? who saved them from the flood and hailstorm, from locusts and grasshoppers? In some sections of our country, the crops have been destroyed. Are we better than those, who have thus been visited? Have we deserved better at God's hand? Is it not a wonder, that God has dealt so mercifully with us? And how have we requited the Lord, for all his benefits? Has not God's providential care been

ignored by many ? How little are his rich mercies valued, and how little is done for God and His cause ?

I have often wondered, that men, whose fields God has so richly blessed and protected, are not afraid to mock him with their mean, pitiful gifts, at the harvest collection. They are ashamed to let their fellowmen see what they give, but they forget that God sees and knows.

“Be not deceived, God will not be mocked.”  
“Whatsoever a man soweth, that will he also reap.”

The question comes home to every one, “Do ye thus requite the Lord ? O foolish people and unwise !”

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which has so fearfully come upon others, for it is written, “Behold ye despisers and wonder and perish, for I saith the Lord, will work a work in your days which ye shall in no wise believe though a man declare it unto you.”

Whilst however, we would have you study nature in all her works. To be filled with reverence and awe of the majesty and glory of God, to learn to adore his profound wisdom, to be penetrated with a sense of His goodness, we would not have you study the Bible less.

Whilst in your walks and journeys, we would



have you look around and contemplate the great works of God, we would have you in your homes, prayerfully read and study your Bible. We would have you observe, that in all the lessons of nature, there is not anything taught about your soul, about the Lord Jesus Christ and his great salvation, nor about the world to come, this proves the necessity of a divine revelation. Moreover, the Scriptures throw a lustre upon nature and sanctify all its teachings.

Nature is a vast book of emblems and figurative representations, shadowing forth the great spiritual truths of the Bible.

The sun beams forth the brighter glories of Jesus, the sun of righteousness. The stars set forth the glory of the saints in heaven. The rocks point us to the Rock of Ages, the sure foundation and resting place of God's people. The streams are emblematical of the streams of grace, the river which makes glad the city of our God. Thus wherever you go, and whithersoever you look, you find in nature, emblems typical of spiritual truths.

Let nature lead you up to Nature's God, to wonder, adore and love, and let the Bible lead you to Jesus, who is able to save to the uttermost, all who come to God through Him.

## SUPERABOUNDING GRACE.

TEXT.—But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.—Rom. v. 20.

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Sin and grace, are in our text, placed in contrast with and in opposition to each other. Like two mighty warriors in battle array, standing ready for conflict, one seeking to vanquish, to destroy the other.

Every person, is either under the dominion and control of sin, or of grace. The apostle argues thus, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness,” (Rom. vi. 16.)

SIN AND GRACE, ARE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE TO EACH OTHER.

### I. *As to their origin.*

Sin proceeds from the devil and from man. Grace comes from above, it descends gently like the early dew, from the Father of mercies.

### II. *They are different in their influence.*

Sin reigns like a tyrant, with an iron rod and drives men against their better knowledge and con-

victions, from one degree of wickedness to another, until they are entangled like the bird in the net of the fowler, or like the wild beast in the trap, where all their struggles will avail them nothing.

Grace, constrains and leads with the cords of love, with the power of truth through the better feelings of the heart and the convictions of their minds, so that they become ready and willing captives.

III. *Sin and Grace, are different in the consequences their service entails.*

Sin darkens the understanding, perverts the judgment, hardens the conscience, draws the soul away from God, the only true source of peace and happiness, and entices men to the putrid fountains of the world, its sinful delights and indulgences, where they in vain seek to slake the thirst and satisfy the cravings of the immortal spirit. Sin leads to shame, disgrace, remorse and ruin here and hereafter.

Grace however, has quite an opposite influence, it enlightens the mind, directs the judgment, elevates and ennobles and fits man for the duties of life, leads to and brings us into fellowship with the virtuous and good, imparts peace and hope and joy, and secures the assistance and approbation of God.

IV. *Sin and Grace are alike, and yet unlike in regard to their power.*

Both abound, (the German says are mighty.) Of sin it said, it is mighty, but of Grace, it is mightier, both have a powerful constraining influence. But mighty as that of sin is, that of Grace is still mightier.

When we speak of sin, when it is made the subject of thought or reflection, there are many persons, who imagine that it has only reference to gross immoralities, such as cursing, swearing, drunkenness, lewdness, murders, thefts and the like, such crimes which blacken the character of the individual and are injurious to society. They think not of the inordinate desires, sinful affections and thoughts of the heart, the opposition to God, His laws and especially the great plan of salvation, and yet these are not only equally sinful, but are the prolific source of all outward sin. For the Lord says, (Math. xv. 19,) "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies." Ever since sin entered into the world, its power and influence, has been great. From its source, as from an exhaustless spring, it has spread like a mighty flood, over the whole race of mankind. Many evils, which affect mankind, as for example, pestilence, famine, the horrors of war, are restricted

to particular nations, countries and localities. But this is universal. From the time sin entered into the world, it has flowed on the whole earth like a mighty flood, and reigned like a tyrant and brought kingdoms under its iron yoke of oppression.

But, it has also brought individuals under its sway. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and it reigns with absolute sway in the individual, as long as he remains under its dominion, takes possession of the whole man, with all the powers and affections of his nature. The prophet says, (Isa. i. 5, 6.) "The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores."

And the worst feature in the case is, that men are controlled by the power of sin, to such a degree, that they are led, contrary to their better knowledge and convictions, to live in a manner they know they ought not, and to do those things which they have seen in thousands of cases, have proved ruinous, and yet they blindly rush on to ruin. O ! how universal and how great the power of sin ! To what an extent does it not abound ? To what a height of forgetfulness of God and wickedness does it not lead men ?

We are not surprized to see the fearful reign of iniquity in heathen nations. Language fails us to describe it. The apostle gives a fearful account of it, as it existed in his day.

“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, adultery, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, deceit, malignity, haters of God, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, &c.”

Nor has their situation improved by the lapse of time.

Nor is the situation much better, in nominally Christian lands, though restrained somewhat by the influence of religion. Yet what iniquities abound in all circles, amongst the high in rank and the ordinary class of society, and all this against light and knowledge. Look at the robberies, murders, defrauding, incendiarism; the heart sickens at the picture.

It is however, only in the light of God's word, that we fully learn to realize the extent of the reign and power of sin. But shall it always be so? Is there no remedy, no counteracting influence, no power greater than that of sin? Yes, thank God, there is, our text says, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

V. *The mightier influence and power of Grace.*

The word grace in general, means unmerited mercy, bestowed by God. But here in the text, it means the great plan of salvation, wrought out by Jesus Christ, through which the individual and the world, are to be rescued from the power and dominion of sin. Thus the apostle uses the term, (Eph. ii. 8.) "By Grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Hence also the apostle calls it the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2nd Cor. viii. 9.) Because he purchased it. Hence the gospel, the religion of Christ, is called the Grace of God, (Tit. ii. 11.) "For the Grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men." Now of this Grace it is said; It abounds more than sin; It is mightier.

This Grace is co-extensive with sin, the text says, "Where sin abounded Grace did more abound." It is intended to counteract the effects of sin, wherever found.

Wide as the reach of Satan's rage  
Does thy salvation flow,  
Tis not confined to sex or age,  
The lofty or the low.

It has proven its efficacy upon heathen nations. Wherever it has been declared, it has modified the cruel laws of nations, banished superstition, raised

the tone of mora's, and thousands of individuals have by its power been freed from the dominion of sin. Yea, whole nations have been regenerated and become the followers of the Lord Jesus. Individuals, too, the worst of characters have felt its freeing and transforming power. Those possessed of devils in the days of the Saviour, though raving, that no man could bind them, were delivered and were found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind. Mary Magdalene, a notorious sinner, was freed from the dominion of sin and made an humble follower of Jesus, through this all sufficient Grace.

And thus in every age, many have been delivered from the power of sin and been transformed into new creatures in Christ Jesus. Slaves to their passions and lusts and to all manner of vices, long fettered and bound as by iron chains, have been liberated, raised from the degradation of sin, and have become useful members of society and active in every good work. And the same grace can keep them, through faith unto eternal life. Let not the individual, under the bondage of sin, despair of ever being delivered from its power. True, he cannot free himself, but Grace, more powerful than sin, can set him free.



Let no one despair of his friends, of his children, but commend them to the Grace which is in Jesus, by fervant, believing prayer. Let not the Christian in his conflicts and trials despond, for unto him, the Lord says, "My Grace is sufficient for thee." Let us not imagine that the church cannot rise to a higher degree of activity and zeal, to a greater degree of holiness. Let us not despair of the world, as though the tide of iniquity would overwhelm it.

For in due time the all conquering Grace of Jesus shall overcome. For the kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdom of our God, and Christ Jesus shall reign from the river unto the ends of the world.

## HOME SCENE OF BETHANY.

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TEXT.—Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.  
—Jno. xi. 5.

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There are places and events, though in themselves apparently insignificant, and in a worldly point of view, not to be compared with others, which yet have attractions that make us fondly cherish their memory, and around which our affection fondly clustre.

For example : The place of our birth, however humble ; The scenes of our childhood; our joyous schoolday plays ; the house of God, to which we were led, by a father's or mother's hand. These and many scenes of our early days are fondly borne in remembrance.

Thus, there are events and places recorded in the sacred Scriptures, which by the christian are kept in hallowed remembrance, where his love is kindled afresh, places hallowed and consecrated by the presence, the footprints, words and actions of the blessed Redeemer. With what emotions do we dwell upon Bethlehem, with the wonderful Child in the manger-cradle. Nazareth, the child-home of

the Saviour. The sea of Gallilee, whose sand shores bore the impress of his sacred feet, and whose raging storms he stilled. The mountains which echoed with his midnight prayers. The garden of his agony ; Calvary, with its death scene. All these places, with their events are dear to the Christian's heart, and he loves to dwell upon them.

Such was Bethany, a little village on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, whither Jesus often resorted, and where he ever found a cordial welcome, in the humble home of Martha, and her sister and Lazarus, under whose roof he slept, at whose table he sat, and whilst partaking of their humble fare, fed them with heavenly food. This village with its home, has strong attractions for the Christian's heart. There we behold natural affection, hallowed by the holier ties of religion. There we learn how Jesus loves to meet and sympathize with his own, and there, too, we behold the sympathies of his humanity, blending with the power of his divinity.

I. *We contemplate the home scene of Bethany, with the instruction it affords.*

The Bethany of the Scriptures has long since passed away, and we find naught but a rude Arab village in its place. That home, once radiant with joy, and hallowed by the Saviour's presence, has

long since become desolate. The bodies of its inmates sleep in the tomb, awaiting the resurrection morn, to join their disenthralled spirits in the home of Jesus on high. There are few homes to be met with like that of Martha and her sister and Lazarus. It was a home triply consecrated by sincere, devoted heart affection; by the hallowing influence of religion; by the affectionate and sympathizing presence of the Saviour.

A model home for us to aspire after. In how many families of our day, pure heart affection is wanting? Instead of ministering to, and promoting each others happiness, there are but discordant elements which prove a constant annoyance to each other.

How many homes, are destitute of the sanctifying influences of religion, where Jesus is never a welcome guest?

Let us look in upon the household of Bethany, let us seek to copy after it and make it a model for our own.

Here were two sisters and a brother, living in perfect harmony. The parents had, no doubt been dead for some time, but we find not there, as is often the case now, with brothers and sisters, a striving and contention for the mastery, after the parents are

dead. Martha was the oldest, and was looked upon as the head and was submitted to as the guide of the rest. Or, if it be true, as some suppose, that Martha was the owner of the house, and took the brother and sister (after the death of the parents) to her home and provided for them, it sets forth her character in a still more favorable light, and exhibits an example for brothers and sisters, to cherish an affectionate regard for each other by ministering to and promoting each other's happiness.

Nothing presents so beautiful and delightful a scene as a household, where love, affection and harmony dwell, where each tries to ~~outdo~~ the other in efforts to render them happy.

On the contrary, nothing presents so painful a scene, as a family, where discord and strife prevails where each becomes the tormentor of the others.

Let us then look in upon Bethany's home and seek to make it a copy for our own. Let natural affection, hallowed by the still holier ties of religion, sanctify our home circle.

And particularly let *brothers and sisters* seek to live together in peace and love. Your parents may yet be living, and if so, how gratifying to them to see their children, living in harmony, cherishing the purest and sincerest affection for each other, and

particularly to see them the children of God, the friends of Jesus, encircling with them the altar of prayer in the homestead, and standing side by side with them at the table of the Lord in the sanctuary.

If your parents are dead and gone, O, dishonor them not by bickerings and quarrels, whether you live together in the old home, or have separate households. Suffer not their prayers, counsels and instructions to lie buried with them, in the grave unheeded and forgotten. This subject teaches us again.

II. *That Jesus loves to meet and dwell with those, who open their homes and hearts to him.*

What was it that led his steps to Bethany's home? There was nothing externally in the dwelling peculiarly attractive. It was not marked out from the surrounding dwellings by its architectural style, or the beauty of its surroundings. There were, no doubt, many dwellings in and near the village, externally more imposing and attractive. Yet Jesus selected this before all others, as the place where he delighted to make his home. There, after the toils and labors of the day were over, he spent many an hour, in the enjoyment of its, peaceful seclusion, and in social and christian intercourse.

Ah, my friends, the mystery is easily solved. There were loving hearts there, hearts that beat

in unison with His, He ever found a cordial welcome there.

We can well imagine the sisters and brother, in the cool of the evening, on the flat roof of their dwelling, eagerly watching their Saviour friend, as weary and way-worn, He was descending the rugged pathway down the steep slopes of Mount Olivet, and as they perceive his coming, hastening to meet and welcome Him to their home.

Blessed, thrice blessed, those who open their hearts and homes to Jesus—who eagerly watch for his daily coming, as they that watch for the morning. Blessed are they, between whom and the Saviour there is a holy attractive influence.

III. *This subject teaches us also, that whilst Christians cannot look for an exemption from the common trials of life. they still have a sympathizing friend to whom they can look for aid and comfort.*

Even into this household, consecrated by piety and hallowed by the Saviour's presence, sickness enters, and death claims one as a trophy of his power.

We might have expected, if there had been one family circle protected by the overshadowing wings of guardian angels to ward off sickness, Bethany would have constituted that exception, but not so, for the sad tidings are sent to Jesus, Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick, and shortly follows the announce-

ment, Lazarus is dead. So the most devoted of God's children may expect trials and bereavements. These may obscure the beams of the Saviour's love as the clouds obscure the rays of the sun. But the darkest clouds are often fringed with a radiant hue and the storm that rages wildly is succeeded by the brilliant rainbow of promise. These trials are but for the glory of God.

In these trials the family of Bethany had a dear and sympathizing friend, absent, tis true, for a little while, but even in his absence mindful of them. They knew where he was to be found, and sent a messenger to tell him of these sorrows, and though for a while he delayed his coming, yet this very delay, rendered his help the more signal and glorious. Thus the christian knows that though dark providences overhang his pathway, yet "Behind a frowning providence, God hides a smiling face."

They too, have a Saviour friend, they know where He may be found, and can send their sighs and tears as messengers, to spread their case before him, and though He may linger a little while, He will come and turn days of affliction and trials into days of rejoicing and triumph.

Brethren, let us learn and practice the lessons Bethany's home teaches us, let our homes be triply



consecrated by sincere devoted heart affection ; by the hallowing and sanctifying influence of religion, and by the affectionate sympathizing presence of the Saviour.

Let our hearts and homes be ever opened to Him, and in passing by, He will cheer us by the visits of His gracious and blessed presence, and having received Him in this life, He will receive us to His mansions on high, where in the beatific vision of the here unseen, but loved Saviour. We shall dwell with Him forever.

Those that welcomed Him here, will be welcomed by Him there.

## RAISING THE WIDOW'S ONLY SON.

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TEXT.—And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain : and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now, when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: And they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak : and he delivered him to his mother.—Luke vii. 11, 15.

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The event recorded in the text, is one peculiarly affecting, and at the same time, rich in instruction. The day before Jesus had miraculously healed the centurion's servant, as He was entering into Capernaum. The next morning, as He left, on His mission of love and mercy, and was approaching Nain, a little city, not far from Capernaum, he met a funeral procession, slowly wending its way to the place of burial. It was the funeral of a young man, just arrived to years of maturity, and the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and poor. He was her only stay and support. She clung to him, with an affection, such as a mother only can cherish.

We may well imagine, that she wept, and was sorely distressed. Though poor, she appears to have been much respected and highly esteemed in the community, for it is said, much people of the city was with her. It is nothing uncommon, when the rich are buried, to see a large and imposing procession, when the remains of the poor are followed but by a few. This proves that this widow merited the respect thus manifested by the citizens of Nain.

As the funeral procession was coming out of the city, a large concourse of people, coming from the opposite direction, met them, at whose front was one, upon whom the attention of the multitude appeared to be fixed. This person, came forward and touched the bier, and the carriers, astonished, stood still. The multitude on both sides, were struck with amazement, wondering who would dare thus to stop a funeral procession, quietly and solemnly wending its way to the place of burial.

But behold, this stranger in mildest accents, addresses the afflicted mourner, "Weep not !" This was not merely an empty sound ; there was power in that word. It dried the fountain of her tears, and soothed her troubled heart. It was not like the unavailing expressions of sympathy which men often utter, and then go their way without doing anything

to relieve and aid. Behold, in the conscious dignity of His Divine nature, He stood before the dead and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise," and behold, he that was dead sat up and began to speak. What arrogance and presumption! What blasphemy, says human reason? but was it so? was that command not obeyed? did not the young man arise and speak? Ah, my brethren, I need not tell you, who this was that spoke so authoritatively. You will all instinctively exclaim, truly this was the Son of God, whose word is life and power, who can yet raise the natural and spiritual dead.

The Lord, having called him to life, manifested his sympathy to the weeping mother by delivering him to her. "He gave him to his mother." How simple, and yet how sublime! Since he gave her this son, at his natural birth, and now here again. So he gives his people life, not twice only, but three times, first natural, then spiritual, and then eternal life.

This narrative is not only deeply affecting, but teems also with truths and instructions which sparkle with beauty, like morning dewdrops in the rays of the rising sun, when these truths and instructions, are irradiated and quickened by the influence of the Holy Ghost.

O, thou spirit of the Living God, enlighten our minds, that we may see, and touch our hearts, that we may feel their importance and power.

The history before us, shows

I. *How Jesus comforts the mourning*, "weep not."

II. *How He raises that which is dead*, "Young man, I say unto thee arise."

III. *How he unites those who have been separated by death*, "and He delivered him to his mother."

I. Of the mourning and weeping in this world of sorrow and trials, there are many who stand in need of sympathy and comfort, far better than men can give. The men of the world often only tantalize and mock us in our trouble. We stand in need of Divine sympathy, of the comforting influences which the religion of our Saviour alone can give. Of Him who can still the sorrows of the tempest tossed soul, whose voice is as oil poured upon the troubled waters, which reaches not the ear only, but the heart, who said to his disciples, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives, give I unto you."

Yon widow was not the only mourner, nor her's the only cause of tears. The young set out upon

the voyage of life, with the fond anticipations and bright hopes, dreaming of naught but a prosperous journey. They build airy castles, and indulge in fancy sketches of unalloyed happiness and prosperity, but, as on the ocean, the fury of the storm suddenly overtakes the mariner in his fancied security, so also in the voyage of life. Storms suddenly overtake us, from within and without. Castles built in air vanish, our fairest prospects are blighted and all around and before us is dark and dreary. What now can sustain us, but the hopes and promises of the gospel? Friends, allied to us by many ties and associations in life, upon whose friendship, aid and counsel we firmly relied, are turned away from us, when with Job we are constrained to exclaim, "my kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me." Then we need, a sympathizing friend like Jesus, who sticketh closer than a brother.

There are also circumstances of a peculiar character in our households, which cause anxieties, apprehensions and disquietudes, sickness, with its pains and feverish excitements. Death invades the domestic circle, and tears from our fond embrace our loved ones. Under these, and similar circumstances we need a friend, whose sympathies are more than hollow and unavailing expressions of re-

gard, more than mere airy sounds, but such as reach the heart with a soothing calming power.

Of comforters there are many, but most of them are like Job's comforters, probing and lacerating the wound, without a soothing and healing balm, causing the heart to ache more acutely, but having no antidote to heal the smart.

Some mockingly use the Saviour's words, "weep not," but these possessing no virtue and power. Weep not, say they, your trials are but the common lot of mortals. Bear them like men of courage. Forget them by mixing with and enjoying the pleasures of the world, or by immersing yourselves in the business pursuits of life.

Such comforts fall upon the troubled soul, like the frosts of spring upon the tender plant, scathing and withering it. They but mock us, like a lifelike painting of fire mocks the man perishing with cold, or the painting of a table laden with food mocks and disappoints the hungry.

Ah, my brethren, there is but one true comforter. His "weep not," is not an empty sound, it is full of power, and, like in the case of the poor widow, bestows the necessary relief.

The very idea that Jesus, as a sympathizing friend has a fellow-feeling for us, is in itself, sooth-

ing and comforting; our miseries touch his heart, and our tears call forth his compassion. Amidst all our trials, of whatever character they may be, He meets us graciously, and says to us "Cast all your cares upon him, for he careth for you."

To those distressed on account of their sins, He says "To this man, will I look, even to him, who is of a broken heart, and contrite spirit and trembleth at my word." To the christian, mourning o'er his weaknesses and imperfections, He gives the assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee." To those bereft of loved ones, He points upward and says, "These you shall meet again." Hasten then, ye weeping and sorrowing, hasten to Jesus.

With all your wants and wounds,  
Your every burden bring,  
Here love, unchanging love, abounds,  
A deep, celestial spring.

Our text

II. *Teaches us how Jesus awakens the dead.*

Behold, how he approaches the funeral procession, touches the bier, and with his almighty word, calls to life, him, whom they were carrying to the grave.

Here again, His word is life and power. It startles the dead and calls him back to life, "For the



dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live ?

Of the dead there are countless numbers. There are spiritually and naturally dead. O, the countless millions of the spiritually dead, living, walking, speaking dead, crowding the walks of life, like living spectres, sitting in our churches like painted images, created in God's likeness, but without his life and spirit, whose soulless songs die away e're they reach the mercyseat. Alive, active in the pursuits of life, but dead to all spiritual duties and enjoyments, whose religious sensibilities are blunted, who are past feeling, dead in trespasses and sins. Though the blood courses through the veins, there is no spiritual life-fluid which animates the soul. Though the beatings of the heart may be felt, there are no pulsations, no throbbings of soul after God and heaven.

Can these dead live again ? Is there any power to recall them to consciousness and life ? Here human contrivances fail ; you can't galvanize them to life. Men may use various appliances, and cry in loudest tones, "I say unto thee arise," but all in vain. As well might any one, or all of the crowd that attended the funeral of the widow's son, have at-

tempted to recall him to life, as men by human appliances to restore the spiritually dead.

But He, who called him to life, yet lives, he is able also to awaken the spiritually dead. To this thousands can testify, and gratefully hail him as having brought them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and satan to God. This he does not miraculously, but instrumentally, through his word, made effectual through the eternal Spirit, by convincing them of sin, by awakening and calling forth desires and aspirations after mercy, by sanctifying, elevating and ennobling their affections, that they delight in holiness and righteousness. Blessed Jesus, let thy voice be heard and thy power be felt, that the dead may live !

There are also the naturally dead, a countless number whom death has slain and over whom he still reigns with undisturbed supremacy. This earth is a vast prison-house of the dead, whose iron bars no mortal has been able to break asunder—a boundless cemetery, where are entombed the millions of the past ages, whom death has slain and whom He yet holds bound in his iron fetters. There is not a family which has not some representatives in the kingdom of death, whom he holds as hostages for the delivery of the rest. But as the Saviour has come

into the world, to deliver men from the effects of sin, and of death is one of the effects of sin, he has de-spoiled death of his power, and proclaimed a general amnesty or jail-delivery. The time is set, when all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and shall come forth and live, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.

It remains for us yet to consider,

III. *How Jesus unites those, whom death has separated.*

Death had sorely bereft the mourning widow, he had parted her and her only son, according to all human expectation, until the resurrection morn. She had looked upon him as he lay shrouded in his coffin, as she thought, for the last time, but unexpectedly was he restored unto her. How simple, affecting, and yet, how expressive the words of the Evangelist "He gave him to his mother." Greater by far must have been the joy at their reunion, than the grief of their parting. Christian, though your sorrow was deep and pungent, when your loved ones lay enshrouded in their coffins, and were buried out of your sight, but O, the transports of joy at the meeting in heaven. Jesus yet lives and re-unites those who have been sparated.

The best of friends, members of the same household, parents, children, husband and wife, sisters and brothers, are often separated by a death, more distressing and dreadful in its consequences than natural death, whilst some by the grace of God are awakened converted and made new creatures in Christ Jesus, other members of the family are yet dead in trespasses and sins, whom their pious friends mourn over as the fond mother mourns over a loved one, shrouded in the coffin. They look to eternity and shudder at the idea of an eternal separation. But behold, in answer to their efforts and prayers these, too, are made alive in Christ Jesus, and they rejoice together in hope of the glory of God and with the rejoicing father of the prodigal son, crying "This my son was dead, and is alive, he was lost and is found."

Again, Jesus will re-unite his own in the world to come, in the mansions of the Father's house on high. We have all felt the pains of bereavement. We fondly cherish the memory of our departed dead. With a melancholy satisfaction, we plant the significant evergreen upon their graves, and water them with our tears; these may wither and die, but our affection for them withers not, and the remembrance of them never fades. By faith we pierce

the gloom, and behold the sainted dead in purer climes, where sorrows are felt no more, where sin and death can never enter. When we think of our sainted dead, we longingly inquire, Shall we meet them there? Yes, there kindred spirits shall meet to part no more. How transporting, how enrapturing the thought! and if the very idea fills us, with such emotions, what must be the reality? O, me thinks I see those, who for years ago have gone before and those, who, in later times have died, meeting there. See how they rush into each other's embrace! Hark, what greetings, such as ravish the soul: My dearest father, my fond mother, my sainted child.

It is thus that Jesus re-unites, the parted—blessed, happy, eternal union. From whose heart bursts not, and from whose lips quivers not the prayer, thus blessed Jesus unite me forever with my loved and parted ones.

How full of instruction the simple and plain narratives of the sacred scriptures. But whilst we love to dwell upon them, let us ever be intent to learn the lessons they teach, and to draw from them the comfort and encouragement they afford. We need the active sympathies of the blessed Saviour, who never passed by the weeping and sorrowing,

His "weep not" can dry the tears and still the sorrows of an aching heart.

He yet lives to awaken the spiritually dead, to a new and holy life, and can prepare and fit us for a blessed union in heaven.

## THE PROMISE OF JESUS TO HIS DISCIPLES.

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TEXT.—Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.—Math. xxviii. 20.

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This was the encouraging promise the Lord gave to his apostles, as He commissioned them to preach the gospel. This was the last familiar intercourse he had with them shortly before his ascension. He found they were sorely distressed, because they were soon to be deprived of his visible, personal presence. Especially so, in view of the difficulties and trials to which they would be exposed as individual christians, and the dangers and persecutions they would be called to meet, in preaching the gospel of the despised Nazarene, whose doctrines were to the polished Greek's foolishness and to the Jews, a stumbling-block.

Now to calm their fears, to encourage and support them, he gave them the comforting assurance, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.

We dwell with deep interest, upon the parting counsel of a dear friend, upon whom we depended in time of difficulties, of one who always sympath-

ized with us. The promises and assurances of a friend, able to fulfill his word and cheer us amidst life's struggles. So the promise in the text, no doubt raised the drooping spirits of the apostles, it has enlivened and cheered many of Zion's pilgrims in every age, amidst their trials and discouragements.

The firm conviction that under all circumstances and at all times, they can rely upon the sympathies of their Saviour to sustain them, has and must have an upholding and animating influence upon the followers of the master.

THE HEART-CHEERING PROMISE OF JESUS TO HIS DISCIPLES.

This promise was given to them, as individuals, in their trials and conflicts, as apostles and representatives of the church, and it holds good, to the ministers of the gospel, to the church at large, and to every individual member of the church, however humble he may. We may all lay claim to its fulfillment.

I. *We direct your attention to the person who gives the assurance.*

When a promise is made to us, a great deal depends upon the character of the person who made it. We naturally inquire, can we rely upon and trust his word? We have often been deceived in



placing confidence in the promises of men. This is however, not the word of a mere man. It is the word of the Godman, Jesus Christ, and as a guarantee for its fulfillment, he prefixes it with the declaration, "all power is given unto me in heaven and upon earth." As the son of God co-equal with the Father, he necessarily must possess all power as mediator, the universe is put under Him, that He might redeem the world, gather a church, protect his people, subdue all their enemies and bring them off as conquerors and more than conquerors.

Again, men cannot always be with us. They cannot be at more than one place at the same time, but Jesus is omnipresent, He can be with thousands and millions, at as many places at the same time. All His people can lay claim to the fulfillment of this, and all His promises.

Again, men may not know the difficulties and circumstances we are in, and though they did, they could not always help us ; not so with Him, He knows perfectly all our difficulties, our trials, dangers, and conflicts, and has always both the disposition and ability to help us.

Again, men from various causes, beyond their control, are at a distance from us, our cry for help

cannot reach them, and with the best intentions, they cannot help us; Jesus is never afar off, He is ever with his people, we can always reach Him with our cries, nay, the very sense of their need, before it is expressed, is borne upon the air of heaven to His throne of grace, for the Lord hath said, "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear, (Isa. lxv. 24.

Again, men, from various causes, may change their minds, and break their promised pledges, but Jesus changes not, He is yesterday, to-day and forever the same, he is ever faithful to His promises. Our best friends may die, but He can never more die. He died once for all, and rose again, and is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and is exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sin.

II. *We consider the promise made, "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.*

Let us analyze the promise.

Lo, This is an obsolete word, it bespeaks attention, expresses surprise, sets forth the importance of that to which our attention is called. And is not the promise of the Saviour in the text worthy of our attention? Is it not surprizing, a matter of wonder, that it should be made to such unworthy creatures

as we are, and is it not a matter of the greatest importance? What! if Jesus should withdraw himself from us and leave us to battle life's storms without His gracious presence, we might well despair. O think of, ponder over it, lay hold of His gracious assurance and bless Him for it.

*I am.* This sets forth the essential character of the Saviour. When Moses was called of God, to present himself to the children of Israel, as commissioned of God to deliver them, from bondage, he was afraid they would not believe him, and inquired of the Lord, "when I come unto them and say, the God of your fathers hath sent me, and they shall say unto me what is his name? What shall I say? God replied, thus shalt thou say, *I am*, hath sent me unto you (Ex. iii. 13. 14.) *I am*, denotes the self-existent, unchangeable God. Now it would seem as though Jesus, in the text applies this title to himself. *I am* with you. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Phil. ii. 6.) We have here then set forth the essential character of Jesus as God co-equal with the Father.

*I am with you*, not I will be with you under certain contingencies, but I am now and will ever be. The expression *with you*, often implies, being of the same opinion with, on the same side of a cause with;

but here it would appear to have a more specific, tender signification, it means, to be at your side. This seems to be the idea in Luther's translation; he has it, *bei euch*, not *mit euch*. This gives the expression a peculiar significance. O, how cheering the thought to have the good shepherd constantly watching, caring for, sustaining and upholding us. The word *you* brings it home to each one and is a call to apply it personally to ourselves.

The word *always*, may have reference to time in general, and thus denotes constancy, but the word has no reference to circumstances and changes and events which may take place. In the original it is, on all days, every day, under all the events which may befall you day by day. It is the same idea set forth in the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," that which is necessary day by day, as our need may be, as our circumstances require. So in the promise of the text, I will be with you day by day, as the day brings with it its trials, its wants, you may day by day need my aid, I will be at hand.

### III. *The persons to whom this promise is given.*

It was originally given to the apostles, but not exclusively to them in their individual capacity, but to them as representatives of their successors in the

ministry, in all succeeding ages. It is given to me, and I rejoice in it. Ministers have trials of which many private christians know nothing. We need the prayers and sympathies of our people. A great responsibility rests upon us. With our best intentions and efforts, we are often forced with the desponding prophet to exclaim, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. l. 1,) and at times we feel disposed to give up the work, but the feeling of the apostle lays hold of us, "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel." We must preach, for the command is, "Thou shalt go to all that I send thee and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak," (Jer. i. 7.) Feeling our own insufficiency we would despond, this promise of the master, however, encourages and cheers us, so that though like the apostles we must complain, Master we have toiled all night and have taken nothing, yet with them we will take fresh courage, and say nevertheless at thy word we will let down the net, and the Lord rebuked our want of faith, and gave us an abundant success.

This promise is given to the church. The apostles were the representatives of the church. She has had her conflicts and trials from the beginning. Satan has stirred up and marshaled his hosts in

fierce array against her: worldliness, infidelity, the fire and sword, the scaffold and stake. Kings and the great of the earth have opposed her onward course. The kings of the earth and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and his anointed saying: Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. But He that sitteth upon the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall hold them in derision, (Ps. ii. 2. 3.) The Lord has fulfilled his promise, "I am with thee always." The Lord is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; with the promise of the text on her banners, she shall overcome every obstacle, vanquish all her foes and come off more than conqueror. The promise holds good for the individual christian.

The christian's course lies through an enemy's country. He has found out by experience, that

"This world is not a friend to grace  
To help him on to God."

He is beset with difficulties from within: his own depraved nature; from without: all his surroundings in the world, are unfavorable to his progress in piety. Every sense may become a snare, the eye, the ear, the taste, the touch. Thus surrounded, under a sense of his own weakness, he often exclaims, who is sufficient for these things? But he

stands not alone. The promise is his, "I am with you, always, every day, under all trials and troubles which each day may bring." Let us all look to and trust in Him, his grace shall be sufficient to sustain and strengthen us. Think of the character of Him who gives this assurance. We may mistrust the promises of men. They often fail us in the day of our need, but He can never fail us. His essential character, as the Son of God, as equal with the Father, to whom all power in heaven and upon earth is given, is a sufficient guarantee for the fulfillment of what He has promised.

He is never afar off, ever near us, with us, at our side, on all days. He knows the difficulties we are in. He never changes his mind in regard to us, never lacks the disposition and power to help. Can any one for a moment distrust the Saviour? Christian, distrust yourself and earthly helpers, but O, never distrust your Saviour, and in the future as in the past you will realize the promise made to you. Let no one imagine that as he is so poor and humble, the promise is not for him. If you were not too poor and needy for Jesus to come into the world to save you, surely he is willing when you have entered upon his service, to give you every needful grace and

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strength for every conflict and trial. His grace is mighty in the weak.,

O ! then, casting all your care upon him, you may joyfully sing.

"In life his presence is my aid,

"In death t'will guide me through the shade,

"Chase all my rising fears away.

"And turn my darkness into day."



## CHRISTMAS SERMON.

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TEXT.—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace ;  
Good will toward men. Luke ii. 14.

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Remarkable events in a nation's history, have been cherished and kept in lively remembrance by setting apart, the days on which they occurred, as days of memorial, to commemorate them. Thus the birth, exploits and death of great men, statesmen and warriors are kept in continued remembrance. The skill of the painter, the art of the sculptor are had in requisition. The monumental pillar is raised high to their memory, and the eloquence of the orator is called to aid, in keeping in mind and instamping upon the history of nations important events, in which they glory. And why should not the church act as wisely in setting apart certain days, in commemoration of the most remarkable events, in the history of the world's redemption through Jesus Christ ? Days, to keep alive the prominent, fundamental doctrines of our holy religion, such as the birth, death, resurrection, ascension of our Lord, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost ? Such days have been set apart in the

earliest ages of the church. Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Whitsuntide, are held in high esteem and gladly welcomed by all true christians.

The birth of the Saviour was the most wonderful event the world ever witnessed, and at the same time an event fraught with results so important, so far reaching, that imagination can scarcely conceive, and human thought cannot grasp. The event can never be forgotten. It has been indelibly enstamped, not only upon the pages of history, but upon the hearts of untold numbers, who through it have been ripened for glory, and are now beholding Him of whom the angels on Bethlehem's plains sang so sweetly.

It marks the era of our civil years. Every law passed by Congress or State Legislature, every proclamation of the President of the United States, or the Executive of our State bears its stamp, every letter you write or receive, every law enacted, every legal instrument of writing, is signed and dated from the year when the Saviour was born, and when the angels on Bethlehem's plains, trilled their triumphant song, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men."

The event of the Saviour's birth, is acknowledged throughout all christendom, and has been

celebrated with appropriate religious exercises for centuries. In this congregation, it has been regularly kept for over a century, and during my ministry of about forty-six years, neither through sickness or absence have I been prevented once from preaching our regular Christmas Sermon. This song of the angels seems to be prophetic, and sets forth the design of the incarnation of the Son of God, and the ultimate effect of his religion:

I. *To bring the greatest revenue of praise to God.*

II. *To bring a rebel world to submission to, and peace with God and with themselves, "on earth peace."*

III. *As an effect of this peace with God, to produce good will among men.*

Good will towards, (or among) men.

I. It brings the highest revenue of praise to God.

a Because it affords the noblest theme of praise.

The angels had long beheld the unveiled glory of the Eternal. They basked in the sunshine of his presence. They had seen displays of his attributes—his power. This was displayed at the creation of the world, for at creation's dawn the morning stars sang in harmony. His power and wisdom blended

in the creation of man, the master-piece of his handy-work, was seen by Angels. They had beheld his justice in the case of the spirits who kept not their first estate and in his judgments upon a guilty world. But never had they beheld his mercy shine so conspicuously as in the incarnation of his dear Son, nor his justice so inflexible, when it would not pass by a single offence without an infinite atonement. Here was a new and an exalted theme of praise. This is the noblest theme upon which we can dwell, calculated to call forth the highest notes of praise. The incarnation of the Son of God, is a theme upon which all the redeemed on earth and heaven, men and angels can unite, for all are interested in it. True, angels are not interested in it like men, for they never fell and needed not a Redeemer, yet every exhibition of God's character, every display of his love and mercy endear him the more to them, every addition to their number, every soul saved, every sinner rescued affords them a new incentive to praise.

6 It was to save sinners, Jesus came into the world, to raise men to the dignity and honor of sons of God. This brings the greatest meed of praise to God, because it fits and qualifies myriads to give him the praise and glory of their salvation.

Thousands and millions, through Christ's humanity, have been raised to His dignity, through his humiliation have been highly exalted, through his poverty been made rich, and filled by his grace to swell loud anthems of praise in this world, and still more enrapturing songs of praise among the redeemed above.

II. The birth of Christ was designed to bring a rebel world to submission to, and peace with God.

Man had risen in rebellion against God, high and heavendaring rebellion, as the apostate angels had done before. But how different the conduct of God towards them from his conduct to us. Whilst they are bound in chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, to us is sent an ambassador from the court of heaven with offers of peace and pardon, upon terms, honorable alike to God and the sinner, with a glorious plan of salvation, by which God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. For God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not imputing to men their trespasses. Now offers of peace are made to the world at large, to every individual, to you and to me. Not only are offers made, but God is employing every consideration and motive which can have an influence with rational beings, beseeching us to be rec-

onciled to God. Every penitent beleiving soul shall have peace within, the turbulence of passions shall be stilled, the clamor of conscience shall be hushed, the power of sin be broken, the fear of death removed, and the soul be enabled through faith in the Redeemer to look to God, confidently crying Abba Father. The love of God manifested in the gift of his son, has conquered many a rebellious heart. Such condescension, such love, such appeals they could not withstand, but have been constrained to submit calmly and willingly to their Saviour. Submission to all God's plans and purposes, this will produce peace with God, within themselves and peace with all around.

III. Another design of the 'incarnation, is to produce good will among men.

This however only when men have been brought to reconciliation with God. Whatever natural feelings of sympathy for their fellowmen they may cherish, whatever good men may do to their fellowmen from any other impulses, it nevertheless remains true:

"A foe to God was ne'er a true friend to man."

When men become reconciled to God, they will love each other. Love is a distinguishing trait of christian character. By this they shall be recognized as disciples of the Lord. The Saviour sets this forth as a

test of their discipleship, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." This was especially noted in the first christians. Behold how these christians love one another. This love is however not restricted to friends, but embraces the whole race of mankind, nor is it a mere emotion and feeling, but an active principle. It eradicates every evil feeling of anger, passion and envy, prompts us to do good to all, assimilates us to Jesus, who went about doing good.

This love will produce peace and good will not only among individuals, but also among nations. Nations are already beginning to discard the sword and implements of warfare as the means of settling their disputes, and resort to arbitration on the principle of equity and justice.

Let all keep in mind the Lord's birth, and as professed disciples of the Saviour keep in memory the day set apart in the church in remembrance of this event, so important to the world at large. Let the angel's song, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to men," be sung in every land, by every one, and above all, let us see that Jesus Christ be born in us the hope of glory.

## A FRIEND OF PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.

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TEXT.—The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. Luke vii. 34.

By this expression the enemies of our Lord, intended to bring reproach and contempt upon his character, to debase and lower him in the estimation of the people. They associate him with the worst of characters, with men universally abhorred as the very pests of society, as favoring and conniving at their wicked practices.

Never was there uttered a baser slander and a fouler calumny, and never did men unconsciously utter a more important truth, and unwillingly pay the Saviour a higher meed of praise, than by calling him the friend of publicans and sinners, for therein consists his highest honor and glory.

This truth has arrested the attention, calmed the fears and inspired with hope the desponding and despairing. It is the theme upon which the ransomed on earth and the redeemed in glory have dwelt in sweetest, loudest and most enrapturing strains. It is inscribed in letters of living light up the banner



of the cross as it floats in the breezes of heaven. It is deeply engraven upon the entablature of many hearts. It encircles the brow of the Saviour, as He is sitting upon his throne on high, in his essential character, as the Godman, Redeemer, unchangeably the same, "The friend of publicans and sinners.

The words of the text are full of meaning. Though uttered by his enemies in disparagement of his character, yet it would appear that the Holy Spirit, in order to cause the wrath of man to praise him, has imparted to the words a significance and importance almost without a parallel, impregnated them with a divine power, felt by thousands, and has placed them in the sacred records, as a testimony for Jesus, as the "Friend of publicans and sinners.

The words may be viewed in different aspects, and in each they present a different idea.

I. *Viewed in reference to the intention of those who uttered them,*

They contain a base slander.

II. *Viewed in the abstract,*

They contain a most important truth.

III. *Viewed in reference to Jesus,*

They contain the highest eulogy.

IV. *Viewed in reference to us,*

They afford the greatest encouragement.

I. The assertion in the sense intended was both false and maliciously uttered, with a view to injure the character of the Saviour and to render him odious in the estimation of the people. They intended to make the impression upon the minds of the people, that he approved of the sentiments and conduct of the publicans and sinners, that he loved to associate with them, that there was a congeniality of feeling, that he took part with them and associated with them.

Now the whole tenor of the Saviour's life proves this to be false. He did indeed on some occasions mingle with them, but it was to do them good, to instruct them and lead them to a knowledge of the truth.

Let us glance at some occasions when he associated with them. In John's Gospel, ii. we find him at a marriage in Cana of Gallilee, but instead of giving countenance to the sentiments and practices of publicans and sinners, we find him performing a miracle, and thus setting forth his character in such a convincing manner, that many were induced to believe on him. On another occasion (Luke vii. 36) when a Pharisee, Simon by name, invited him to a great feast at his house, the affecting scene of Mary Magdalene, washing the Saviour's feet with her

tears, and wiping them with her hair, took place ; Jesus took occasion to show that he had power on earth to forgive sin.

In short, in all his intercourse with the Pharisees and Publicans, he proved that he was not a friend of Publicans and sinners in the sense intended. That there was no congeniality of feeling between them, that he in no wise connived at their evil ways and practises, this is further evident from the constant reproofs he gave them, and from his steadfast efforts to lead them to repent of their evil ways. It was a base slander, when we view the words in the sense intended and yet,

II. When viewed in the abstract, the words contain a most important truth.

Jesus is indeed the friend of sinners, His heart ever yearned for their welfare and salvation. Every effort of his life was devoted to this object. This was the great end and aim of his mission. For this he suffered and bled and died. Can there be any better evidence of true friendship, than for a person to give his life for the rescue and deliverance of others ? This friendship he constantly manifested whilst he dwelt upon earth. When he saw the multitude an hungered, he miraculously multiplied the loaves and fishes. This friendship he manifested by the sympathy he felt for the afflicted by

healing all manner of diseases, by his willingness to rescue and save, even to the uttermost. Jesus is yet the sinner's friend, just such a friend as they need—an ever gracious friend, who will turn none who come to him away, an almighty friend, as able as he is willing, able to subdue the proud spirit, to break the stubborn will, to overcome the corruption of the heart, to calm the fears of the troubled soul. He is a constant and unchangeable friend whom nothing can turn against us, constant in adversity and prosperity, in days of joy and sorrow, in life and death. This is one of the most grand and sublime truths that was ever uttered. It is the crowning glory of the gospel. It has found a joyful response in the hearts of thousands, who have experienced his power to save. It is the theme of enraptured songs of the redeemed on earth, whilst saints in glory make the heavens to re-echo with the strains of the new song, "Worthy is the Lamb, that hath been slain," to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. The power and efficacy of this truth has raised the despairing, comforted the mourning and cheered the dying.

III. Viewed in reference to Jesus the words contain the highest eulogy.

Though the words were uttered in disparage-

ment of his character, yet a higher meed of praise could not have been paid him. To his highest praise it has been, is, and will be said, "The friend of publicans and sinners." From many a poor soul, which has found pardon through his blood, from many a broken, contrite heart, which in him has found peace and consolation, from many a weak and desponding child of God, which has through him found encouragement and strength, comes the joyful response, "The friend of publicans and sinners."

To be a friend of the great and good, does not appear strange and uncommon, but to find one a true, active, sympathizing friend of the poor, forsaken, the miserable, the perishing, is calculated to arrest the attention, and call forth the admiration of the virtuous and good, yea even of the wicked. We greatly honor the philanthropist, who employs his best efforts to ameliorate the condition of the poor and suffering, in establishing and maintaining institutions, for the blind, the deaf the widow and orphan, to reclaim the erring and wandering, such are held in high esteem, their praise is set forth by the eloquence of the orator and the touching strains of the poet. Monuments are erected upon which their deeds of love and mercy are inscribed, their names are embalmed upon the pages of history.

But what is all, that such have done, and all that can be said of them, in comparison with that which can be said of Jesus, "The friend of publicans and sinners."

IV. Again, viewed in reference to us, these words set forth an encouraging fact.

It is not only said of him, but it is really so. As such, he is revealed to us in the Sacred Scriptures. Such is the name and title given him, and this name and title he has fully sustained. He has proven himself as such in the days of his flesh, in every age and among all nations. Thousands bear testimony from their own experience.

And is not this an encouraging fact, for all who feel themselves sinners, who long for help and deliverance, for the weak and desponding child of God, and for the dying christian. It has dispoiled death of his terror, and shed a heavenly light over the dark valley and brought to view the realities of his eternal home. In addition to all this, Jesus has left an example worthy of our imitation.

We have many bright examples worthy of our imitation set us in the scriptures, and examples around us, in life, sparkling with radiance and beauty, like the stars in the firmament, whose light God has kindled, to guide and animate us. But all these ex-

amples pale and fade into insignificance, when compared with the example of him who was, is, and ever will be the friend of publicans and sinners. An example of active selfsacrificing efforts, in behalf of the suffering, the lost and perishing, who went about doing good. Let us set before us and seek to copy after him as far as possible, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," both to keep in view his spotless life, dispensing blessings, where'er he went, and also looking to him for grace and strength to enable us in our intercourse, with others to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Let our ardent prayer be.

Be Christ our pattern and our guide,  
His image may we bear?  
O ! may we tread His holy steps,  
His joy and glory share.

Christian, thou hast an abiding, unchanging friend. Why shouldst thou fear and be dismayed ?

## JESUS THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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TEXT.—But unto you that fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. Mal. iv. 2.

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In the chapter from which our text is taken, wrath and mercy, justice and grace are placed in strong contrast. In the first verse we read, "Behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubbles." Now in contrast we read, "But unto you that fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings," both wrath and mercy flow from the same source. It is often thus in nature. The same sun hardens and softens, clay is hardened and wax is softened by it. The rays of the sun invigorate some plants and wither others. There is however always some adequate cause, either in the nature of the object operated upon, some defect in the plant, or its roots, in the soil or the position in which it is placed, which produces the different effects.

It is thus with Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness. He arises with healing in every ray of mercy, upon those who place themselves under his divine in-



fluence, upon those who fear his name. But if men oppose themselves to him, withdraw themselves from his healthful rays, or obstruct these rays by worldliness, indifference, unbelief and sin, their hearts will be hardened the more. Hence it is that under the preaching of the same gospel, some are awakened and converted and others are hardened. Some christians are more enlightened, become more active, more devoted and more holy, whilst others maintain but a sickly existence, languish and die. It will become a "savor of life unto life or of death unto death."

We present for our subject,

*"Jesus Christ the Sun of Righteousness."*

The natural sun is used as an emblem of Deity, "The Lord is a sun and shield," (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.) Especially is the natural sun an emblem of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is emphatically the sun of righteousness. The sun in the gospel system is what the natural sun is to the physical world, in its inherent glory, its vastness and its influence. He is the sun of righteousness, because through him alone we can attain to that righteousness, in which we can stand acquitted before God, because only through him we can be made righteous in heart and life.

I remark here,

I. *There is but one sun in the firmament for the whole world.*

Other objects and influences, in the natural world are many : Light, air, water, heat, the power of attraction and repulsion, all these subserve their purposes, but there is but one sun, it has no compeer or rival, all other objects and influences combined cannot supply its place. So in the moral and religious world, there is but one sun of righteousness. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, (1 Tim. ii. 5). Whatever other influences may be brought to bear, to lead men to a better and holier life, to rescue and save the lost, without Christ they cannot avail to save a single soul.

“Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name, under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved,” (Acts iv. 12).

None but Jesus, can do helpless sinners good.

II. *The sun is the source of all light.*

Whatever other things in nature there may be from which light emanates, moon and stars, yet they receive all their light from the sun, the moonlight and starlight, borrowed as it is, would have little or no effect upon vegetation and life without the light of

the sun. So, Christ is the source of all light, He is said to be the light of the world, source

*a* Of natural lights, He is called the father of lights. At creation's dawn, He said, let there be light and there was light. Without natural light, how miserable would our condition be, we would be shut out from all the beauties of creation, unable, though the eye was most exquisitely and perfectly formed to behold the countenances of friends or to engage in the necessary avocations of life. The whole world would be one vast blank.

*b* He is the source of all intellectual light. When we examine the structure of animals and brutes, we find that in the adaptation of its various parts, for the purposes of life it is as wonderful and as curiously framed as that of man. But they are void of reason, they have no reasoning and rational soul. But there is a spirit in man and the Almighty has given him understanding. It is this which exalts man above the brute creation, exalts him in the scale of being and qualifies him for all the purposes of life, for the enjoyment of communion with his God and for everlasting felicity.

*c* He is the source of all spiritual light. In him all truth centers, nay, He is the personification of truth, all the truth of the Old Testament, centres in

him and receives its fulfillment in him, and he brought life and immortality to light by his gospel. Through his spirit he makes the light effectual, banishes from the sinner's mind the darkness, in which he is, by reason of the blindness that is in him, gives him a discovery of his spiritual dangers, reveals and discovers to him the riches of his grace, that the sinner may rejoice in him, as the apostle expresses it, "God who hath commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

d The emblem or comparison of Christ Jesus to the Sun is peculiarly appropriate when considering the influences which flow from him.

*The sun quickens into life.*

Behold the dreariness of winter—all nature lies bound as it were in the grasp of death. The meandering rivulets are bound up in icy fetters, the trees are shorn of their foliage, the flowers have drooped and died, the songs of the birds are hushed, the beasts of the forest have fled to their lair, and some sleep the long sleep of winter. But behold the rays of the sun in springtime, how they re-call to life and animation all nature. The rivulet breaks its icy fetters and flows gladly along, skipping on the rocks,

~~watering its banks and opening its placid bosom to~~ beasts and fowls to drink. The trees put on their living spring garb of beauty. The flowers begin to spring forth and bud and blossom. The meadows are covered with their grassy carpet, the sweet carolling of the birds is heard, and all nature is restored to life. So Christ, the sun of righteousness by his word and spirit, quickens and calls into life the moral and spiritual world.

When Christ came into this sin-cursed earth, darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people. So blind were men, that when Christ came, the light shone in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. Idolatry, superstition and vice reigned triumphant. The whole world lay in wickedness. Moral death was spread all around. Contrast the nations of the earth, under the influence of Christ and his religion, the sun of righteousness with their situation before, and you see new life springing forth everywhere ; in every phase of society ; in all the departments of human effort ; in the arts and sciences—these must pay tribute to the religion of Christ. The leaven of his religion has pervaded the whole range of human society, raised man in general, so that he feels he is a man. It has remodelled human governments upon principles of justice and

humanity. It has influenced ~~social life and bound~~ man to man by mutual dependence in bonds of love. It has elevated and purified the state of morals in the community, called forth institutions of learning and associations of benevolence and thus brought into activity and life, a world sunk in and paralyzed by sin. But as Jesus the sun of righteousness, calls into life the moral world in general, so he also quickens and calls to life the individual, dead in trespasses and in sin.

Look at man in this state, though perhaps free from gross vices, though restrained by his surroundings, though from a decent respect for the opinion of society, he may keep in check, the outbreakings of an evil heart, yet he is dead to all that is virtuous and good. There is in him an evil heart of unbelief, no spiritual and divine life, no pulsations of the heart after God, he has no delight in spiritual matters and lives unconcerned about his eternal interests. When we contemplate such, and those steeped in iniquity, we are ready to exclaim with the prophet, as he looked o'er the valley of dry bones, and ask, can these dry bones live? Improbable and impossible as it might have seemed, yet they did live. And so may these dead sinners live, not by human instrumentality, but when the spirit of God

breaths upon them his life-giving breath. Some of the worst have been reclaimed—a Saul of Tarsus, a miracle of grace, a Mary Magdalene—thought beyond the reach of mercy, was made alive to God. So may all who look to and place themselves under the influences of his rays. But Christ can and will also call forth christians to activity, life and zeal, in the cause of their master.

Many professed christians in their course often become languid, and though they sleep not as did the foolish virgins, yet like the wise virgins, they sometimes slumber. They lose much of their ardor and zeal. Their own christian graces languish, and their activity in the cause of Christ flags. These Christ can reanimate, infuse new life if they look to him, He will arise over them with healing in his wings.

*The sun enlivens and rejoices.*

We all know more or less by experience the depressive influence of want of the sun in dark and dreary days, when for a time the sun is obscured by dark and portentous clouds, all nature seems to be affected and puts on a dreary aspect, the flowers droop and lose their beauty and odor, but when the sun again breaks through the clouds, all nature seems to revive and is decked with smiles, and we

go forth joyously to breathe in the clear fresh air and to rejoice in the gilded beauties, as they spread out before us. So when the sun of righteousness is hidden from us, our faith and hopes languish, and fears and doubts lay hold of us. This is especially the case in trials and sorrows, we are borne down, with none to comfort and cheer us. But when we look to and long for the sun of righteousness, and he by his word and spirit reveals his infinite love, enables us to realize the truth and stability of his promises, then of anew we can rejoice and trust in him, and find in him not only, a source of joy, but of consolation and comfort in the day of trial and adversity. The sun gives light to the whole world. In general to every nation and people, and to every individual in particular, he shines upon the just and unjust. So the sun of righteousness, He is destined to shine o'er the whole world, to bring the earth in subjection to Him, whose right it is to reign, and who shall reign from the river to the ends of the earth. This was the great end of his mission, a light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of his people Israel, (Luke ii. 32).

And what individual is excluded from his grace and mercy ?



To him can every one come without fear of being rejected. The invitation is free.

Come all ye wretched sinners, come,  
He'll form your hearts anew,  
His gospel and his heart have room,  
For rebels such as you.

The light and heat of the sun are perfectly free to the rich and the poor—free without money and without price. So the irradiating, quickening, sanctifying, comforting and saving rays of Christ, the divine sun, are free to all.

Whoever will, O gracious word,  
Shall of this stream partake.  
Come thirsty souls and bless the Lord  
And drink for Jesus sake.

O my friends what have we not in our blessed Saviour! He is the source of all light—*natural, intellectual and spiritual*. He quickens into life—He enlivens and rejoices—He is free and open to all. Now, though under gospel influences for years, what effect has it had upon us? Have we been spiritually enlightened? Have we through him been quickened into life? Do we trust and rejoice in him?

## MIRACLES IN THE PRESENT TIME.

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TEXT.—Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead ; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord : and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bond-men. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee ? tell me, what hast thou in the house ? And she said, Thy handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels ; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her ; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. ii Kings iv. 1-7.

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Elisha's day, was a day of miracles and remarkable displays of almighty power and grace. He witnessed the grand and imposing scene of Elijah's translation to heaven, in the fiery chariot with flaming steeds.

With the mantle which fell from the prophet, an apparently poor, but in reality a rich legacy, he divided the swelling surges of Jordan, with a cruse

filled with salt, he sweetened the bitter waters of Jericho's springs. In the reign of Jehoram, king of Samaria and Jehosophat, king of Judah, when the rains of heaven were withheld and man and beast were ready to perish for want of water, in the name of the Most High, without wind or rain, he miraculously caused the ditches which he had ordered them to dig, to be filled with water for their refreshment.

In a time of great famine, when a young prophet of Gilgal, had prepared a pottage of wild gourds, an herb which was bitter to the taste and poisonous, and which his fellow students, had no sooner tasted than they exclaimed it was poison, by a little meal cast into it, Elisha removed the poisonous properties of it and made it agreeable to the taste. But time would fail us to advert to all the displays of God's power and grace, which signalized the life of this man of God. How he miraculously fed an hundred famishing men with twenty small barley loaves and had yet to spare. How he caused iron to swim, contrary to all known laws of nature. How through his direction, Naaman, the Syrian, was cured of his leprosy. How he restored a poor widow's son to life.

Our text presents a remarkable case of divine interference in behalf of a prophet's widow, whose

hard hearted and relentless creditor, was about to sell into bondage her two sons, the only stay and support of her life. Surely the prophet's age was an age of wonders.

But the days of the prophets have gone by and the age of miracles has ceased, and yet there are many things transpiring daily and brought about in the ordinary course of God's Providence, which, if rightly examined, are not less strange and miraculous, than the events of by-gone years. And the reason why they do not excite our wonder and astonishment, is, we are too much accustomed to view the events which characterize our lives as independent of God's agency and control. Our attention is not so specially directed to them by any sacred record made of them. They are not generally of so public a character, but merely enter into and form a part of historic life of individuals—and because we generally attribute events which enter into and form a part of our individual history to secondary causes, we forget the mind which plans and the hand which directs all things. Now we maintain that these events are brought about by God himself, as really when he directs second causes, as when he accomplishes his purposes, with intervention of any intermediate agency.

We still live in an age of God's doings and wondrous works, and one of the reasons why they do not strike us more forcibly is, they are so numerous, they are of every day's occurrence. There in yonder obscure hamlet, unnoticed by the giddy crowd which passes to and fro, lies one on a bed of sickness, the strength and energy of the system are wasting away. The throbbings of the heart are low and feeble. The lustre of the eye has become dim. The voices of friends fall unconsciously upon the ear, and all hope of recovery is given up, and yet contrary to all expectations, the system rallies, the blood courses through the heart and veins with new life and the individual is restored to life and health as one brought back from the dead. Is there not in this case as remarkable an intervention of God's power, as when He more immediately restores one from the dead?

Behold! yonder, I see a child playfully leaning out of an upper window; a crowd is gathering below anxiously watching its movements, see it stretches itself forward. Take care of that child is heard from among the trembling multitude, but too late, see it falls—a thrill of dread and a cry of terror passes through the crowd, it is taken up apparently lifeless, and now, though there is no prophet to

stretch himself upon it and breathe into it a living breath, as did Elisha with the son of yonder widow, yet behold its breast begins to heave, its eyes open, its tongue recovers its energy, it is restored to its almost distracted parents. What call you this ? Is it less than a miracle ? Did God feed his people ? The prophet through the ravens ? His people with manna from heaven ? the five thousand with a few barley loaves ? So does He now. This fact is chronicled upon the tablet of many a heart, and has called forth many an Ebenezer to his praise.

Look into yonder humble dwelling, there sits a lonely widow, with her little ones around her. The dying embers on the hearth are scarcely sufficient to keep the blood from chilling in the veins, the last morsel was eaten in the morning and as her little ones look wishfully up to her for their evening meal, the tear steals from her eye, as she endeavors to say "The Lord will provide." They prepare to retire. But lo ! a knock is heard at the door, with trembling anxiety she responds to the knock and behold, a loaf of bread and other necessities of life are sent. Who sent it ? Tell me not this was merely accidental, it just happened to be sent by some kind neighbor at this peculiar season of her need. Who disposed this neighbor to do so ? Who inclined and

urged him to do so at this time? I tell you this neighbor was but God's messenger sent to provide for his needy child, as much so as were the ravens, to feed the prophet. Tell me not, these are imaginary cases. Cases like these have occurred again and again, several have happened in a neighbouring town some winters ago. I will advert to a singular circumstance vouched for as a fact by a pious and devoted servant of Jesus Christ, which, as it falls in with the scope of our remarks, we cannot forbear to mention.

On a Christmas eve, a few years ago, a pious but poor widow, lay helpless upon her bed, having several children dependent upon her for support, all around her was hilarity and mirth and feasting and plenty. Her store was exhausted, her barrel was empty and her cruze failed her. In her distress she applied to the Lord, when Elisha's question, What hast thou in the house, vividly presented itself to her mind, and her answer to herself was, what have I but a few empty dishes. This was however replied to by another thought suggested to her, "Go borrow of thy neighbors empty vessels, not a few," (she had read this portion of Scripture shortly before). Fearing however that she was unwarrantably applying this to her own case, she turned the thought into a prayer and said, Lord, behold these my children, in

them hast thou empty vessels, for they are without clothing and food, Lord, fill thou these empty vessels.

And now see how mysteriously and wonderfully God brings about his gracious purposes. Whilst this poor woman is thus distressed, there is a little gathering of christians in a dwelling not far off. In the course of the conversation, their attention was directed by one of the company to this poor woman and it was resolved that each one should immediately send her a Christmas present. So they went, and one after another brought her gifts, some brought money ; another, clothes ; another, substantial food ; another, cakes ; so that literally, she had to borrow dishes to put them in. Who recognizes not the hand of God in all this ? and who is not constrained to exclaim, O God, thou are still doing wonders, marvelous are thy works ?

Having shown that our age is characterized with wonderful displays of God's power and grace, we would direct your further attention,

I. *To the history before us.*

II. *To the reflections it suggests.*

It appears from the inspired history of those days, that good men associated themselves in societies, for the cultivation of the mind, the promotion of



their own spiritual interests and for the good of their fellowmen.

They lived partly in commons, in one house and partly in cottages, scattered around, their support was derived from their labor in tilling the ground, or in the vine and olive gardens. A specified portion of time was spent in devotional exercises, in the study of the Scriptures and in doing good to their fellowmen. A prophet under the plenary inspiration of the Spirit of God, usually presided o'er these institutions, which were called schools of the prophets, and the men attending them were called sons of the prophets.

These institutions had a happy influence upon the community around them. It was there the holy fire burned, and from thence it spread its streams of light and warmth in every direction, from thence a holy leaven diffused itself into the whole mass, a holy feeling was breathed into all around.

Such ought to be the influence of every association of christians, in their smaller and larger forms, from the family circle to the church of Christ at large. The text introduces us to a poor woman, a widow of one of these holy men, left in the most straightened circumstances. The knowledge of the fact that her husband had been a devoted

and godly man, and that now his spirit was at rest, consoled her for her loss. For her daily bread and the supply of her most pressing wants, she relied under God upon her sons who were now growing up to manhood. But alas, how uncertain all our expectations, based upon earthly props, upon an arm of flesh. A creditor of her late husband pressed a claim which she could not liquidate, with him all entreaties were vain. Neither the tears of the widow, nor her impoverished condition had any influence with him, unfeeling and relentless, he determined to go to the utmost extent of the Jewish law and to take as bondsmen for a length of time, her two sons.

She had already parted with all she possibly could spare to liquidate a part of the claim. The sons of the prophets though in needy circumstances no doubt aided her to the utmost extent of their power, yet nothing could satisfy the craven soul of this hard-hearted wretch, he rigorously demanded all she owed.

Under these circumstances, imagine her distress. Enter her dwelling ; there all bespeaks the utmost poverty. Behold her pale and dejected countenance, almost her only support, the two youths, her husband already taken away by death

and how to lose her two sons at once—not by death, this she might have borne, with pious resignation to the will of God, but to see them taken away, sold into bondage, amongst strangers, who knew not and cared not for God, this almost overpowered her already feeble and shattered frame. Me thinks I see her anxiously passing to and fro, wringing her hands and in almost hopeless despair, exclaiming, what shall I do ?

In her distress she applies to the prophet of the living God, through whose agency she had witnessed singular displays of God's power and grace, as her only and last resource. She tells her artless and pitiful tale of woe, "Thy servant my husband is dead and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord, and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen." The prophet as if by some spirit's impulse moved, feels a deep interest in her case and determines to prove to this devoted woman, that the God of Jacob was still living and was as ready as ever to make good his promise, to be the widow's God and the father of the fatherless. See how affectionately he seeks to revive her drooping spirits and how cautiously he enkindles her expiring hopes, as if afraid, the promise of immediate relief would occasion an excess of joy which her

sorrowing spirit and enfeebled frame could scarcely endure. What shall I do for thee? Tell me what hast thou in the house, is the mild and cautious manner in which he seeks to inspire hope, and revive her confidence. The humble response to these inquiries, is "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil." Poor woman, "thou mightest indeed well nigh despair," but He who supplied the widow of Sarephtha, so that her cruse of oil failed not and her barrel of meal never refused to yield her bread, and He who caused the ravens to supply the prophet with food, will not forsake thee. Trust thou only confidently in Him.

"Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels, not a few, and when thou art come in, shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons and pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full." This is the authoritative advice of the prophet. Here was a trial of her faith. Reason might have suggested of what avail to borrow empty dishes, of what avail to pour the little store of oil I have into them. Her heart if not under the influence of God's grace might have rebelled against the procedure, as but a solemn mockery in her distress, as did that of Naaman the

Syrian, when told to go and wash in Jordan seven times to heal him of his leprosy.

But not so, she submits her reason to her faith in the God she served, her confidence in the spirit-guided prophet is unshaken, she seeks not first to scrutinize and comprehend the mysterious plans and operations of Jehovah. She hesitates not long, nothing doubting, she in obedience to the advice of the prophet, collects the vessels and then shutting herself and her sons up in the house, and now in obedience to the direction of the prophet and in the name of her God she takes her pot and pours, and lo, like as from a living fountain, it gushes forth, until there are no more vessels to contain it. In the fullness of her heart, she hastens to tell the man of God and he said "Go, sell the oil and pay thy debt and live thou and thy children of the rest.

Thus God miraculously interposed in behalf of this afflicted and sorrowstricken widow, thus he gave the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. And for what design was this miracle and other displays of God's interference in behalf of his children of past ages left upon record? Certainly not to gratify an idle curiosity or to foster a morbid desire after that which is marvelous and strange, or a mere detail of historic facts.

But that generations after generations in contemplating them, may have their faith enkindled and their hopes revived by the way. They are set forth as so many gems in the crown of Jehovah, sparkling forth and reflecting his power and grace. They are as so many lights kindled and burning and blazing amidst the degeneracy of the times, by which men might see that a God still lived and reigned amongst them, that he will ever vindicate his cause, glorify his name and take care of, rescue and save his people, and as long as the record of them shall stand, they will remain ever enduring proofs of God's faithfulness to his covenant people. "For they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

This God yet lives, nor has he in any wise changed, nor is he less disposed to succour and sustain those who trust in him. The miracles of the Old Testament, scattered all along the pathway of history are but so many pillars set up, to testify for God. They bear witness to his power and goodness. The miracles of the New Testament, whilst they bear the impress of God's power, appear at the same time to be tempered with the grace and mercy which was exhibited on Calvary. They sparkle with the irradiations of the cross, and roll on like

swelling ocean waves, accumulating proofs, that Jesus was the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The subject had under consideration suggests many other important and profitable reflections.

If the children of God would keep a record of God's gracious dealings with them, of special answers to their prayers, of their deliverance from threatened dangers, of seasonable relief in peculiar emergencies, they would find the history of their lives characterized with as wonderful interpositions of God in their behalf, as are chronicled of the days of old. But as these things are brought about in the course of God's providence through the intervention of second causes, they do not strike us so forcibly and make not that impression upon us that they ought to make. But are they on this account less real, are they therefore less the doings of God, and ought they not to call forth the liveliest emotions of gratitude, to strengthen our faith, to inspire us with unshaken confidence, and to incite us to increased devotedness in his service?

Another reflection suggested by the subject before us is "That man's extremity is God's opportunity."

It was in their greatest extremity, when Israel stood on the shore of the raging sea, when Pharaoh's

hosts were pressing hard upon them, when they already saw the dust of their chariots and the glittering of their spears, it was only when they were ready to give up all for lost, that the waters were divided before them and the troubled sea at the command of Jehovah yawned to make an open pathway for them. It was only when the raging thirst was almost consuming Israel, that the flinty rock was struck. It was only when far away from human aid, the prophet lay in yonder cave, ready to perish, that God sent the ravens to supply his wants. Daniel had already been thrown amidst the famishing lions, ere God came to his deliverance. The creditor of the deceased husband of the poor widow, in the text, had already made a levy upon her two sons and in a few days would sell them into almost hopeless bondage, and then, only when every other refuge failed, God interfered for her deliverance. It was only when the people were famishing for want, that Jesus fed five thousand. It was only when on their way to the burial, that he restored the son of the widow of Nain.

It is thus in order to prove their faith, to try their constancy, that God oftentimes delays for a season to help his people. But help deferred is not help refused. Why then should the children of God



immediately give way to despondency, as though God were loathe to help and unwilling to save? In your extremity you may indeed see no way of escape, but God can find or make a way. Look at these records of God's help in the greatest extremity and in your distress, cry with the confidence of the psalmist (Psa. xli. 5), "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance," and you by experience will find that your extremity is God's opportunity.

## THE APOSTLE'S GLORYING.

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TEXT.—God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Gal. vi. 14.

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There is a moral heroism manifested in this expression. A heroism and courage which surpasses that of the warrior hero, who braves the cannon of the battery, and meets the charge of the glittering bayonets.

At the time when Paul uttered the words of the text, the word cross was associated with every thing that was vile, degrading and horrible, as in modern times the words, guillotine, block and gallows are. When therefore Paul gloried in one who was crucified, he had to brave the obloquy, contempt and reproach, not only of the rabble and common people, but especially also of the elite and learned; but nothing daunted and abashed, he boldly declared, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ my Lord."

The natural heart, has not indeed changed in its aversion and hatred to the cross of Christ, and of salvation through the crucified one, nor will it ever, except it be renewed by the grace of God.

It must however be admitted by the most casual observer that a great change has been effected in the manner in which the cross is now regarded throughout the world. It is no longer associated in our minds with that which is vile, degrading, with slaves and malefactors, who have been executed upon it, but with the one great victim whose death has magnified the instrument of torture. The death of the son of God has invested the cross, with a sacredness, which fills us with reverence and awe. Hallowed associations are called forth at the very mention of it. We have learned to regard it as identified with all that is sacred, holy and pure. In the fanatical crusades of nominal christian princes, called forth by the wild, impassionate harrangues of Peter the hermit, for the recovery of the Holy land from the Saracens, the cross was emblazoned upon their banners, and inspirited their hosts. Poets have dwelt upon it in song, orators in telling eloquence paid their tribute to it. It has been inscribed upon the marble which marks the graves of loved ones. It has been worn as an ornament upon the bosom of those who fondly cherished its remembrance. It has become the symbol of the christian's faith and the centre of his brightest hopes.

It is no wonder, that the apostle realizing in his own experience the efficacy of the death of Christ on the cross, with the most ecstatic feelings, exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ my Lord."

*The apostles glorying.*

To glory in anything is to esteem it highly, to regard it above every thing else, to trust and rely upon it, and find our greatest happiness and delight in it. By the cross the apostle does not mean the cross as the instrument of death. He found no object of attraction in this, as separated from him who died upon it for his sins and for the sins of the whole world. He paid no superstitious reverence to it, such as is paid by some, as though the very figure of a cross possessed a magic charm, to heal the sick, to cheer the dying and to open the gate of heaven to them. Such a view of the cross he never entertained, he calls it emphatically the cross, setting forth the death of Christ, and his language is equivalent to saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the crucified one."

The apostle appears to set his high appreciation of Christ crucified in contrast with that of the Jews, to whom it was a stumbling-block, and to that of the Greeks, to whom it was foolishness, (1 Cor. i. 23.)

The learned Greeks gloried in their schemes of philosophy, by which they expected to elevate and raise man to honor, respectability and happiness; they boasted and gloried in their great men, philosophers, statesmen, orators, and heroes, deified and paid divine honors to them, erected temples to perpetuate their memory. He placed himself also in contrast with the Jewish teachers, who gloried in their rites, ceremonies and customs of the law, and boasted of their descent from Abraham. Now, in contrasting himself with such the apostle would appear to say, you Greeks may boast and glory in your wisdom, and great men; and you Jews may glory in your rites, ceremonies and imposing temple services; I have another object of glorying. And as he dwells upon this object so important and clear to him, his soul seems to be fired with the thought, and the idea of glorying in any thing else, seemed so abhorrent to him, that he exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." As though the very thought startled him, shall *I* whom Jesus met on the way to Damascus, whom he arrested in his mad career, whom he rescued as a brand out of the burning, whom he forgave all his sins, by whose cross the world was crucified unto him, and he to the world, shall I glory

in anything but the cross of Christ? God forbid it, preserve me from it, let me never boast or glory in anything but the cross of Christ my Lord.

This emphatic declaration and deliberate determination receives additional force from the fact that by birth, standing in the community, unblemished character, his literary attainments, Paul suffered not in comparison with any of his day, but had just cause to glory. Yet since he learned to know Christ, since by the cross he was crucified to the world, and the world to him, he discarded all these, as a cause for glorying, and gloried in the cross of Christ alone. He cared not what others thought of it. They could not disparage it in his estimation. When he thought of what Christ crucified had done for him, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious, yet obtained mercy, he was enraptured, his bosom kindled and heaved with transports of joy. The cross of Christ, was to him, invested with a transcendent glory. The person who died upon it, the object for which he died, and the eternal felicity to which it would ultimately raise those who believe on him, these thoughts thrilled his soul, that overpowered by them he was constrained to give vent to his feelings by crying out,

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ my Lord."

The apostle however was not satisfied, that he himself was brought to a saving knowledge of this truth, that he was made a partaker of the great salvation, that he had found so great a cause for glorying. He desired that others might be made partakers of it; hence he embraced every opportunity, employed all his talents and powers in leading others to the great Saviour. He raised the banner of the cross, among the simpleminded and lowly, among the learned, great and noble. He determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. Him, he preached as the only hope of salvation. He sought to make the cross winning and attractive. For his success he relied not upon anything in himself, not upon anything attractive in his manner or style of presenting the truth, but in the naked power of the truth and in the consciousness, that it was the power and wisdom of God unto salvation to them that believed.

Nothing is better established, than that the cross of Christ, the preaching of the gospel, is the only effectual means, of elevating and raising man from the degradation to which sin has brought him, of freeing him from the power and dominion of sin,

of improving the morals of the mass of mankind, of ennobling the social relations of life. When all other methods failed, when philosophy was powerless, when codes of morals were as the spider's web, when civil laws with their severest penalties proved unavailing, the gospel of Jesus Christ proved efficacious in all cases, in every age, from the days of Paul to the present day. The proud Greek bowed before its influence, the stubborn Jew has been forced to yield to its power. At Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Phillippi, Corinth and Rome, sinners have been made to feel its saving power, and the preaching of the cross proved itself to be both the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. Passing centuries have but rolled on accumulating evidence of its saving virtue, and encircling the cross with new and increasing lustre. Every soul saved is a new pearl, studded in the cross, to add to its glory and brilliancy. Paul yet glories in the cross, for to it he owes his present full salvation.

Though there is a formal respect manifested for the religion of Jesus Christ, yet how many set themselves against its claims and know little or nothing of its excellency and power, yet they only, who like the apostle have personally learned to know its efficacy and power, can truly glory in it.



There is much glorying in the world. Some even glory in their opposition to the gospel and its claims, as though they could contend against almighty power and prevail. Others glory, boast and delight themselves in their revellings, their deeds of darkness, not dreaming that the end of such things is death. Of such the apostle said, "Many walk, of whom I have told you, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of Christ, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things, whose end is perdition, (Phil. iii. 18, 19). Others glory in accidental and providential distinctions, in wisdom, strength and riches, as many did in the days of Jeremiah, (Jer. ix. 23, 24). Such the prophet reproved. Thus saith the Lord, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Others glory in their riches, they boast of their wealth, saying with the worldling in Solomon's day, "Money answereth all things," (Eccl. x. 19). This is false, (this passage does not express the opinion

of Solomon, but of the wicked) money does not answer all things. It can not ward off disease, nor will it enable us to bear the trials and afflictions of life, nor smooth a dying pillow, nor purchase pardon, exemption from death, or save the soul. The apostle exhorted Timothy to charge the rich not to place their dependence on riches, and calls them uncertain, because they may be lost in many ways. Solomon says, "Riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle toward heaven," (Prov. xxiii. 5). Others glory in their wisdom, but the apostle says, the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. Others again, glory in their strength, but let not the mighty glory in their strength, for it is written, "There is no king saved by the might of a host, a mighty man is not delivered by much strength." All worldly glorying is vain, and tendeth to shame.

Let us rather seek to be able to glory in the cross of Christ, that we have an allsufficient Saviour, that we are found in him not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, (Phil. iii. 9), and as you are able to glory in the cross of Christ, as the apostle, be not satisfied that you have been made partakers of this

salvation, but like him, use your endeavors to lead others to the cross, that they may be made partakers of the great salvation wrought out by him, and with you rejoice and glory in Jesus as their Saviour. There are many among the low, and the higher ranks of life, who are living for no other end than the gratification of self, who sport and trifle with the great concern of their souls. Permit me to ask such, what think you of the cross of Christ and its great sacrifice? Was your soul in so great danger that it required such a ransom? Was it so precious in the sight of God, that he sent his only begotten son into the world to save it? And can you think so little of it? Can you peril its salvation and deem its eternal misery of no consequence, as to spend your days only in the gratification of worldly pleasures and sensual delights, when the Saviour, groaned and bled and died to save it? Can you pass by and laugh and sport and mock, as those who nailed him to the cross?

O, awake from your delusion! give these things at least some thoughtful serious reflections. Think of what Jesus has done for you, what the redemption of your soul has cost, and then can you deliberately dash from your lips the cup of salvation, and be satisfied with the dregs of sin and husks of swine?

## THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

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TEXT.—And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

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The ascension of the Saviour, though not as often made the subject of a sermon, and of the meditation of christians, as it ought to be, is nevertheless the crowning glory of the great plan of redemption.

So highly was the doctrine esteemed, that it was embodied in the apostolic creed, and a special day was set apart in the early church, for the contemplation of this remarkable and important event.

We dwell with deep interest upon the Saviour's birth, and behold in the babe of Bethlehem's manger, the promised Messiah and deliverer. We accompany him to the garden and the cross and witness with melancholy pleasure, the great and allsufficient sacrifice, made for the sins of the whole world. We stand at the tomb and with amazement see him despoiling death of its sting, the grave of its victory and Satan of his power. And we would now behold him, as a mighty conqueror, taking possession of his

kingdom, re-assuming the glory which He had with the Father before the world was ; seated upon the throne, as prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sin, we would see him as a compassionate high priest, ever living to make intercession for us.

The great end and object of Christ's ascension is our theme.

I. *The ascension itself.*

II. *Its end or object.*

*a* It was a reality, not an optical illusion, or a sudden vanishing from their sight, but gradual, witnessed by the disciples, for, whilst they beheld (fixed their eyes and gazed upon him) he was taken up. For thus it is written, "And it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

*b* It was miraculous, contray to the laws of nature. Those bodies only whose specific gravity is lighter than that of the air, according to natural laws can ascend. But the specific gravity of the Saviour's body was heavier than the atmosphere ; yet he gradually ascended, evidently proving, that He was not subject to the laws of nature, that as Godman He was superior to them, that they were under his control. On other occasions he proved

this fact. For example, when his disciples were gathered together, in an upper room, and the doors were locked for fear of the Jews, He appeared in their midst, bodily. In the storm on Galilee's sea, he walked upon the raging billows, and controlled the laws of nature, by calming the troubled waters, and stilling the roaring tempest.

*c* This ascension was glorious.

The ascension of Elijah in his fiery chariot, which typically prefigured the ascension of our Lord, must have been a sight of majestic grandeur. His was a triumphal chariot, sent from the majesty on high, to convey his servant home. Unterrified by the sight, he enters the heavensent chariot, he needs no reins to guide the impetuous steeds, they have their mission, they are heaven-directed, heaven-guided. No obstructions meet his pathway, he has a free pass to glory.

The ascension of the Lord was of a different character; not accompanied with any of those attending circumstances which dazzle the eye, and which savor of display and grandeur in the sight of men. It was appropriate that He should ascend by his own essential power, without any external pomp or display. It was befitting, that as the Lord of all to whom the elements of nature are subject, he

should command the clouds, and that in obedience to him, they should bow at his feet, encircle their master, bear him on high, as a mighty conqueror to take possession of the eternal inheritance for his people.

*d* The place from whence he ascended is worthy of notice. The text says, "He led them out as far as Bethany." We find a peculiar appropriateness between the times and places, and the events in the Saviour's life, which occurred there. Thus it was appropriate that Jesus should ascend from Bethany. Bethany witnessed his deep humiliation, near there his sufferings began, there he was in deep agony, near it he was crucified. It was befitting that this place should also witness his ascension, that there he should be glorified, that from this place as the mighty conqueror over sin, death and Satan, he should make his triumphal entry into the mansions on high, richly laden with the spoils of his victory. It was peculiarly proper that the commencement and completion of his great work, should be at the same place, so that Bethany's sufferings and glory, might ever be held in grateful remembrance, that around it might clustre the fondest hopes and heartfelt delights of all his followers.

*e* The spirit in which He parted from his disci-

ples is also peculiarly worthy of notice. Our text says, "It came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

It is a matter of great importance to us, with what feelings our friends leave us, whether with displeasure and reproaches, or with affectionate regard, and invoking blessings upon us. Christ parted from his disciples not in anger, or with indifference, but with the kindest feelings, to cheer their desponding spirits, to dispel their sorrow on account of his leaving them. He stretched forth his hands, and blessed them. What words he used, we know not. The act of stretching out his hands over them was of great significance, it showed his kind regards for them. I am of the opinion that he used the words which he did on another occasion, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," (Jno. xiv. 27.)

The stretching forth of his hands, may imply that he would ever be ready to help, comfort and sustain them, amidst their trials in life, and that his hands would be outstretched to welcome them to his embrace in heaven. This blessing was however not



for them alone, but for all, that should believe on him, through their word.

This act shows that his bosom throbbed with the same love and sympathy for the children of men when he ascended to heaven, as it did when he came from heaven to save a lost and perishing world; that his hands are still outstretched to save, he is still willing to bless his people.

II. *The great end and benefit of his ascension.*

We are not left to conjecture, whether there are any benefits, accruing to us from Christ's ascension, nor what they consist in, this is clearly revealed. When speaking to his disciples concerning it, he said, (Jno. xvi. 7), "It is expedient for you that I go away." In this passage the Saviour declares in general, that it is expedient, good, of advantage to them, that it entered materially into the great plan of salvation, that it was in fact, its crowning glory, that there as our compassionate High Priest, he appears in the presence of God for us, securing for his people, the full and final benefits of his redemption. Whilst the redemption of Christ is complete, so far as its efficiency is concerned, it has not yet accomplished its design with all, hence Christ has ascended on high, taken possession of his kingdom, as Lord over all, and as king and ruler of his church. Jesus

Christ was both the sacrifice, and the High Priest. The sacrifice has been offered once for all. There will be no other sacrifice, but Christ remains a High Priest forever. Wherefore says the apostle, (Heb. vii. 25), "He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Paul reasons thus, (Rom. v. 10.) "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled (the atonement made) we shall be saved by his life," (by a living Saviour, who is ever interceding for us).

The Psalmist in (Psa. lxxviii. 18), when he says, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, even for the rebellious," has an allusion to a mighty conqueror who having vanquished his enemies, mounts his triumphal chariot and distributes the spoil as gifts to his followers.

To whom he primarily applies this, it is difficult to determine, but we do know that Paul (Eph. iv. 8.) quotes the passage and applies it to Christ. He is the mighty conqueror, who has despoiled Satan of his power, taken possession of his kingdom, and gives gifts unto men—his word, and His spirit, and

holds heaven as the fruits of his victory in reversion to them.

His ascension secures to his church and people, the Holy Spirit, as a guide and Comforter. "If I go not away, the Comforter, will not come unto you, but if I go away I will send him unto you." He has gone before as a friend to prepare the heavenly mansion for our reception, and has promised to come again and receive us to himself that where He is we may be also.

Once more, He has ascended on high that He might be the central attractive power, to draw our hearts heavenward, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," (Jno. xii. 32.) Behold your once crucified, but now exalted Savior sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Think, what He has done for you whilst upon earth, and what blessings he has secured for you, by His ascension.

## THE SEPULCHRES OF OUR LOVED ONES.

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TEXT.—Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron, the Hettite. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebecca his wife, and there I buried Leah. Genesis xlix. 29, 30, 31.

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From the earliest times we find an ardent desire to be buried among kindred and friends. Whence this originated is not for us to say. Whether from cherished memories of the past, or whether it was called forth by the idea that at the resurrection morn they would be near and meet each other, we cannot tell. Certain it is, that this desire obtained in the earliest ages, and it is perhaps as strong in our day as ever.

In the text we have an affecting scene portrayed, in which this desire is most strikingly exhibited.

The Patriarch Jacob, feeling his end was near, gathered his children around him, and after giving them his parental and patriarchal blessing, uttered the touching and earnest request, "Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the

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Hittite. There they buried Isaac and Rebecca his wife, and there I buried Leah."

So strong was this desire, that Joseph, fearful lest his request might not be fulfilled, took an oath from the children of Israel, that when God released them from bondage, they should carry up his remains and bury them in Canaan among his kindred.

The Israelites held the graves of their loved ones in high esteem, as sacred shrines, whither they would repair, to recall sweet memories of the past—to shed tears of affection, to quicken the hope of meeting again. They attached great importance to a decent and honorable burial, to be deprived of this was considered by friends a great calamity.

Solomon expressed this common feeling, when he said, "If a man live many years, and his soul be not filled with good and also that he have no burial, I say an untimely birth is better than he." David (Psa. lxxix.) deplores the treatment of the dead, by the heathens when he says "The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem ; and there was none to bury them."

A like feeling has prevailed in every age and

prevails in our day. In our late sanguinary struggle, what a hastening to the battle fields! What anxiety was there, to seek and recognize and carry home, at any cost the bodies of dear ones slain in battle, that they might be buried among their kindred? How earnestly has a fond mother, whose child died on a voyage, begged that it might not be cast into the sea, to be devoured by the monsters of the deep, but that she might bring the body home, to be laid side by side with other loved ones?

*The cemeteries of our dead.*

I. *The places.*

II. *The lessons they teach.*

The affection of the living for their dead, is manifested by the regard they have for their lifeless remains and the manner of disposing of them. Among the nations who burned the bodies of their dead, the ashes were carefully gathered, and the urns in which they were deposited were considered sacred, and guarded with pious care. A similar feeling, ennobled by religion, constrains us to regard the graves of our dead, as sacred shrines.

The places are called cemeteries, from the Greek word, *Koimeterion*, a sleeping place, including both the idea of rest from all anxiety and care, and also of an awakening and resurrection. Among

the Germans, they are called God's acre or field, in which the frail bodies of God's children are sown, to come forth again at the resurrection, the great harvest day of the Lord. The Germans also call it a church-yard (*Kirch-hoff*). This term is peculiarly significant. In earlier times churches were built in the middle of a large space of ground, which was used as a burial place. This also was significant, setting forth the church as the centre of the Christian's attraction and the stepping-stone to heaven. The word yard, in connection with the word church, has been supposed by some to be taken from and to have reference to the ground surrounding a royal palace, (this is called a Hoff) bringing those in this yard into close proximity to the royal family. Thus the bodies of God's saints rest in his court-yard, He watches over their sleeping dust, and in due time, He will admit them into his glorious presence.

Cemetaries have from the earliest ages, been set apart, consecrated by affection, by the promptings of our nature, and by the dictates of our holy religion for the burial of the dead. A mysterious feeling of awe and reverence, lays hold of every reflecting person, as he enters the sacred place and walks among the tombs. The thoughtless and profane may, indeed not feel the sacredness of the place,

they may laugh and sport amidst all the monuments of death's triumphs, without any serious thoughts of their own mortality or of the world beyond, and yet impressions are sometimes made which they can't shake off. There a separation from the bustle, and din of business invests the place with a deep and impressive solemnity. The air we breathe seems to be pervaded by it, the rushing winds seem to soften into gentle whispers as they pass over, and chant mournful requiems over the graves, the trees cast a hallowing shade o'er the place, and the flowers of variegated hue, planted on the graves, call forth a pleasing melancholy. The songs of the birds seem tremulous with subdued sweetness and sadness. Even the thunder as it rolls o'er the place, and the lightning, as it flashes its glare over the monuments, inspire us with feelings of peculiar awe and reverence, as we stand by the graves of our departed.

Ah ! Brethren, the graveyard is not a common ground, God has invested his acres where seed is sown for the resurrection harvest, with a peculiar sacredness, which all feel and acknowledge, and yet we love to visit them. We are drawn by an inexplicable attraction to the sleeping-place of the dead. Scenes are witnessed there of the most affecting character. There by yonder fresh grave you



see a father with two or three children at his side, not a word is spoken, but their countenances betoken chastened grief. Ah! the wife and mother was lately laid to rest there. A little farther on you see a fond mother, whose darling has been torn from her embrace, kneeling by the little mound, hallowing it with her tears, and perhaps praying that she may be prepared to receive it again, a second God's gift there, where death can no more rob her of it. At another place you see several children around a slab, with but the name of brother or sister upon it, planting mementoes of affection there. There again, others with can in hand, watering the evergreen, the rose, violets and forget-me-nots, which they had planted. You pass along and witness many scenes like these, at morning dawn or evening twilight hour, you would consider it sacrilege to intrude upon their meditation, or to disturb the sacredness of the scene. These little incidents speak volumes and show the regard of the living for the dead. Whilst with chastened feelings we visit the depositaries of the dead, let us not forget the lessons they teach us. They are silent, but powerful preachers. They declare to king and peasant the same truths, ashamed neither of the lowliness of the one, nor awed by the splendor and power of the other.

They teach us, the vanity of all earthly things, of sorrowful partings here below, of the dreadful havoc and evil of sin, of the triumphs of faith over death's terrors, of the resurrection morn, of re-unions above, of immortality beyond, of the importance of being prepared for death. Let us learn and practice these lessons.

Go and walk among the graves, though some may have more imposing monuments than others, and some have nothing but the little hillocks raised o'er their remains, with perhaps a flower or two planted by affection's hand, yet what has one, more than the other, of all that earth could give? What of all things they so eagerly sought after; of honors, of pleasures and possessions. The desire after these things may still exist, but the means to gratify them are gone. Ah! my brethren, the voice from the tomb cries, "Love not the world." "The fashion of the world passes away." "Use the world as not abusing it." Could the dead speak, methinks some master-spirit, who tried all the fancied enjoyments of the world, would in most eloquent language portray the vanity of all earthly things, and thousands around him would corroborate it, with a loud, long amen.

The burial places teach us the dreadful havoc of sin.

Death by sin is the emphatic language of inspiration, were it not for sin death would never have entered into the world, and marred this fair creation of God. What desolations have marked his pathway. The numberless dead all over the world are the trophies of his power, and all the living shall ere long be his victims. How many airy castles has he demolished? How many bright anticipations has he frustrated? How many beating pulses and heaving bosoms has he stilled? How many homes has he made desolate? Death has called into his service mighty agencies. Numberless diseases with their slow and insidious approaches, have in spite of the physician's skill and the kind attendance of friends undermined the constitution, and swelled the ranks of the dead. Fire, sword and famine, have done their dreadful work of death in the most horrid and awful manner. Fire has charred and shrivelled the forms of loved ones in such a manner that they could not be recognized, the sword has maimed, and the bullet has pierced the vitals of hundreds and thousands in a day, yea in an hour. Famine has slowly wasted and tortured many to death. Were it not for sin, death in none of these forms would ever

have entered into the woold, no death-struggles would ever have been witnessed, nor death-groans ever heard, no cords of affection sundered, no hearts lacerated, no farewells spoken, no graves dug, no cemetaries needed. Death made them necessary, but affection and religion adorned and beautified them. In the repository of the dead, I feel more than any where else that I too must die. In me as well as in those sleepers are the seeds of sin and death which will surely, and may shortly bring forth their fruit. Those that repose there, whether known to me or not, whether friends or foes, were once as bouyant with life and activity as I. There is a vacant spot by the side of cherished ones awaiting us. What influence should these reflections have upon us? Should they imbitter our lives with forebodings of the day? Should they fill us with apprehensions so as to unfit us for the duties and enjoyments of the present? Nay, they should but rouse us to act well our part whilst we live, to attain that hope through faith in Christ Jesus, which will enable us to meet death with composure and triumph, and to look over and beyond death's gloom, to that world where the conflicts and sorrows of life are unknown and where the pangs of death are teared and felt no more. At the grave we are forcibly reminded of

the duty and importance of affection and kindness to the living.

There memories of the past, both fond and sad crowd in upon us, we live over in imagination, the days we spent and the intercourse we had with the departed. Memory is perhaps never more active and busy in recalling past events, and particularly our want of regard and kindness to our friends, than at their tomb. All we have ever said or done, to pain or wound the feelings of a friend, a parent, a sister or brother will then be brought to mind, and all we possess would be cherfully given, if those deeds could be undone and those harsh words recalled. O how will that look of sorrow, those tears we caused them to shed, those sighs we forced from their bosoms, fill us with unawailing regrets. O ! cried one who had left his mother's home in anger, and returned just to see her breathe her last. "O ! for one forgiving word or look from my dear mother."

Ah ! regrets come too late, when the friends we have slighted and grieved are gone, they cannot forgive you, but you at their graves may seek and find forgiveness from the blessed Saviour. Treat then, all kindly, especially your loved ones, while they are yet with you, and you will spare yourselves many painful reflections, and think only of happy

days spent together here, and joyfully await a happy re-union above.

Again the dead teach us the resurrection of the dead. When we wander through the avenues of the burial-ground, and look at the many graves, the question comes to us, "Can these dry bones live;" Though reason staggers, yet faith joyfully exclaims, yes, the Spirit of the Lord shall breathe upon them, and breath shall come into them, and they shall stand up upon their feet an exceeding great army. The word of God establishes this truth, our affection for the dead and the yearnings of our immortal nature seem to indicate it. The names given to the receptacle of the dead, prove the almost universality of the belief. It is called *a sleeping place*, from which the sleepers shall arise again, *Goa's acre* where bodies are sown as seed for the great harvest in the world to come, a *church-yard* or court of the king of kings, from which his people shall be admitted into his more immediate presence, and join their sainted dead in the home above.

Among the tombs we are taught, the value of time and the great work of life. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest," is the exhortation of

the wise man; and is the lesson we should learn from the dead. Their time is past, their great lifework is done or undone forever. There is no redeeming of lost time, nor of neglected privileges. After death their doom is irrevocably fixed. The dead could tell tales of wonder, and preach more eloquently than the living preacher, but they are not permitted to revisit the earth, nor even to return to their father's house, to tell of joys above or woes beneath, to warn and entreat their brethren who are left behind. Their graves, their tombstones, their cherished memories, preach more powerfully than the living preacher, the truths they declare come from sealed lips and silent tongues, they address not the ear, but speak direct to the heart and conscience, they cry "Therefore be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man may come." Learn and practice the lessons, the dead teach us, they are of the most momentous character, involving your eternal interests. Many ardently cherish the desire of being buried in the same place where their kindred are, rather than to be gathered to their pious dead in heaven.

A certain man, whom I well know, and for the truth of this fact I will vouch, purchased a lot in a burial place, next to the place where a godly min-

ister was buried, with the idea that at the resurrection, he might with him ascend to glory, and yet at the time this man made no pretensions to piety—vain delusive idea ; though on either side, the most devoted christians be buried, it will avail us nothing if we are not true followers of the Lord, there will be fearful partings at the great day.

It is said that among ancient Egyptians there obtained the practice of trying the characters of the dead, before a regularly constituted tribunal. If the person had lived an immoral life, he was denied the usual rite of burial, and his body was cast into a sink or pool. On the contrary, if he had led an exemplary life he obtained an honorable burial. Whether this historical narration be true or not, we cannot say but we do know, that at the great day of the Lord, the characters of all will be strictly scrutinized, and those weighed in the balance and found wanting will be refused admittance into the Paradise of God, and cast away from his presence and from the glory of his power.



## SELF, THE GOD WHOM MANY SERVE.

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TEXT.—My river is my own, and I have made it for myself.  
Ezekiel xxix. 3.

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The wicked, through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts, is the assertion of one, who, from his own experience and from observation, was well acquainted with the secret workings of the human heart, and who was under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost and could not possibly err in his judgment.

In their prosperity men are disposed to banish God from their minds. They ascribe all their prosperity to themselves, but are ready to cast all the blame of their afflictions and sorrows upon God, not willing to give Him the honor and praise for their blessings.

This is and has been the disposition of man in his natural state, and in every age. It is clearly intimated in the text. The language of the text, was that of the proud and haughty king of Egypt; he had risen to great power in his kingdom and revelled in wealth. His palace and its surroudings, its artificial lakes, its costly water-works to irrigate his lands, his luxurious bathing houses, his unrivalled gardens

with all kinds of fruits and flowers, were such as to gratify the most enlarged desires of any man. These were the sources of his enjoyments, in these he prided himself. He ascribes all the glory of them to himself, "My river is my own ; I have made it." He considers himself, first the author of all, and secondly his own self, the end and object of all, "I have made it for myself." Although at the announcement of this text, some may have thought, this is a strange text, there is nothing in it applicable to us, no important truth set forth. Let us examine and see.

Are there none in our day who like Pharaoh, make a God of themselves, who attribute all they are and have to themselves, and use all they have for their own aggrandisement and glory, and defiantly exclaim, "My river is my own ; I have made it for myself!"

The truth we deduce from the text, is *Self the Idol*, which many worship.

- I. *They attribute all they have to themselves.*
- II. *They employ all they have for themselves.*

This was the case with Pharaoh. *Rivers* are often made use of in the Scriptures to denote sources of enjoyment. Thus we read, (Isa. xxxiii. 21,) "The glorious Lord will be unto us, a place of broad rivers and streams." Again, (Isa. xlviii. 18,) "O ! that

thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments. Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

Thus in the text, Pharaoh sets forth all his sources of enjoyment under the similitude of a river. But in all these enjoyments and possessions, he ignored God, and in the pride of his heart ascribed all to himself, "My river is my own; I have made it." Thus there are many in the world, who in the Providence of God, have been highly favored, possess many sources of enjoyment, been highly blessed in basket and in store, who forget God as the Giver of all they are and have, rob him of the honor due to him and ascribe and give all the glory to themselves. They forget too, that all these things are but lent and intrusted to them for a season, that they are accountable to God, for the manner in which they use the things thus bestowed upon them.

Now, it is true that God has endowed us with such powers of body and faculties of mind, and placed us in such circumstances that by the right use or abuse of them, we may under God, become the authors of our happiness or misery, and to a certain extent, shape our own destiny for weal or woe, for time and eternity.

God in the government of the physical and

moral government of the world has established certain relations between cause and effect, so that certain causes will ordinarily produce good, others evil effects.

Thus, diligence is generally crowned with success. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich, but he that dealeth with a slack hand shall become poor." It is in accordance with God's plan that the man pursuing an honorable, upright course of conduct, the man who by study has cultivated his mind, and who spent his efforts in selfsacrificing devotion to the welfare of his fellowmen, will merit the esteem and gain the confidence of all whose esteem and regard is worth having. Whilst on the contrary men, who have no respect for their own character, and prostitute the powers of body and mind to mean and low purposes, will soon sink down to their proper level, and loose the confidence and respect of all the virtuous and good.

Now, though it is true, that men to a certain extent have their destiny in their own hands, their circumstances in life, their wealth, prosperity and honor. Yet independent of God and contrary to God's plan and purposes, man can accomplish nothing. From whom has he health and strength to labor, and who maintains it? From whom are the powers of his

mind? Who crowns his labors with success? Who orders events and circumstances and who presents favorable opportunities?

Let none boast and put himself in the place of God. Let none blasphemously say, "All I have, all my sources of happiness, my condition in life, all is my own work, I have made it." Take heed, lest robbing God of his honor, He may take from you, destroy all your sources of enjoyment and cast you down from your proud eminence, as he did Pharaoh from the glory to which he had risen. And the reason the Lord gave for this was, "They shall know that I am the Lord." Because he said, "My river is my own, I have made it for myself."

As some ascribe all they have to themselves, and to their own efforts, so they employ all they have to their own aggrandisement.

Here again they ignore God's claims, the claims of society and of their fellowmen. Some who have been raised from comparative poverty to wealth, whose efforts God has blessed, whom he has prospered in their undertakings, never raise their hearts in thankfulness to him, nor realize the obligation to consecrate themselves with all they are to his service. Others, who have been raised to positions

of honor and influence, instead of using that influence to promote the honor and glory of God and the temporal and spiritual good of their fellowmen, forget their accountability to Him, neglect their own eternal interests and use that influence in opposition to the religion of Jesus Christ and in leading others astray. O ! if men of influence and standing in society, would only realize the fearful responsibility resting upon them, and the condemnation which awaits them, if they use that influence for evil and not for good, methinks they would pause and reflect. Speak to some of prostituting the God given powers of body and soul, merely in the pursuit of sinful pleasures and gratifications, they will indignantly answer, "These powers are my own and I will use them as I please." Speak to others of time, of the precious day of grace which God has given them, of the free and gracious invitations of the gospel and they will reply, "My time is my own, I will spend it as I please." Speak to the Sabbath-breaker, who instead of spending God's day, in praising Him for the mercies he has received and asking his blessings for the future, who desecrates the day in devising schemes and plans to further his own interests, in vain amusements, in idle company, or perhaps in places of vice and wickedness, speak to him about

the wickedness of such a course and he will answer, "My Sabbaths are my own and I can spend them as I please."

As it is true, that to a certain extent, men are framers of their own prosperity in this life, so also is their destiny in the world to come in a great measure in their own hands.

As God in his moral government has laid down rules and plans by which he is pleased to bestow temporal favors, so also has he in mercy devised a plan through which man can secure his own salvation. He has made an atonement through the vicarious sacrifice of his Son, by which sinners can be saved. He has instituted means, by which a sinner can be awakened and interested in his own salvation. He has established a throne of grace to which he can approach, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. God pleads and intreats with all the affection and fervor he can command, that sinners become reconciled to him. Now, if through these influences he suffers himself to be led to the Saviour, repents of his sins, he can be brought into covenant relation with God, fitted to live to his praise here and to dwell with him in heaven forever. But if he hardens his heart against all these influences, if he cleaves to his sins and rejects this

Saviour, he seals his own doom, and in the regions of woe he will be constrained to exclaim, "I have made this myself, and for myself, it is my own fault that I am here!"

Let all recognize the hand of God in all their sources of enjoyment, their possessions, their positions in life and give him the honor due to his name.

The greater God's favors, the greater our obligations and responsibilities.

If any of you have been brought from darkness into light, be ready to say with the apostle, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Remain faithful, cleave to him through evil and good report, "Then when Christ, who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory." But if any go counter to God's plans and purposes, both as it regards their temporal and spiritual welfare and they bear the natural consequences, let them not complain, "They have made it for themselves."

If the idle and dissolute come to poverty and shame, let them bear in mind that they are but reaping as they have sown.

If the immoral, the man devoid of principle, who has no regard for his own character, no self-respect, if such an one is not respected by others, if he is banished from the society of the virtuous



and good, and is left to associate with such like himself, let him not complain, "He has made it for himself."

If he who has disregarded the claims of God and religion, slighted and abused the privileges he enjoyed, and refused the offers of mercy, if he in after life must endure the upbraidings of a guilty conscience, and on his bed of sickness and death be left without hope, let him remember, "He made it for himself."

If at the judgment-day he finds himself classed with such as he is, trembling to hear the dreadful sentence pronounced against him, then he will be forced to acknowledge it was his own fault.

And in yonder world of woe, in that utter darkness which no gleam of God's mercy ever shall pierce, where regrets and sighs and tears shall no more avail, where the echo of prayer (if prayer shall ever be offered there) shall return an empty unanswered sound, and the lapse of years shall bring no alleviation and afford no hope of a respite, he will be forced to exclaim, "I have made it for myself."

## TELLING JESUS OUR TROUBLES.

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TEXT.—And they went and told Jesus. Math. xiv. 12.

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The circumstances which called forth the words of the text, were of the most distressing and affecting character. John by his faithfulness in rebuking the licentiousness and adultery of Herodias, so incurred her displeasure and excited her hatred, that she instigated Herod with whom she was living in adultery, to cast John into prison. Some time afterward, on Herod's birthday, he had a ball and dance and no doubt under the influence of liquor, made a rash promise to the daughter of Herodias, who charmed him with her dancing, and confirmed it with an oath that he would give her whatsoever she would ask of him. Instigated by her wicked mother, she said, "Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger."

Herod felt some compunctions of conscience, yet nevertheless, for his oath's sake and them which sat with him at meat, he ordered it to be given her, and he sent and beheaded John in prison, and his head was given to the damsel and she brought it to her mother.

How the disciples of John must have felt when they heard of it, language can't describe and imagination scarcely conceive. His imprisonment must have been a source of great grief, but his death, in this most dreadful form must have almost overpowered them. Their great affection for their master, prompted them to give him a christian burial, and then, after they had paid this sad testimony of respect to their much loved teacher, borne down with grief and sorrow, they went and told Jesus.

How affecting the scene. Picture it in your minds. Behold them, sorrow-stricken, with almost broken hearts, their tongues almost refusing utterance, they can scarcely tell the sad tale, their breasts heaving with anguish, with sobs and cries, and voice trembling with the emotions which fill their bosoms, they say, "Lord, they have killed, beheaded our beloved teacher in prison, and we have just come from his burial." Methinks I see the Lord sympathizing and mingling his tears with theirs. He understood their case and poured into their hearts such consolations as he only could impart.

This subject teaches us an important lesson and affords us a source of encouragement in times of trouble.

*In times of trouble, of whatever character it may be, "Go and tell Jesus."*

Excessive grief, pent up, often becomes insupportable. It must have vent.

There are persons, who, under bereavements and trials can't weep, and are almost distracted. But when under such circumstances, at last the tears begin to flow, their grief has vent and they obtain relief.

So when we have a trusty friend to whom we can confidently unburden ourselves it affords us relief. We are often disappointed, in supposed earthly friends, to whom we tell our woes. We find not always that sympathy, nor encouragement which we expect. But no one will ever be disappointed when they pour their tale of woe into the ears of Jesus. Whom of all, who during his life on earth did He ever refuse to listen to and refuse aid and comfort, either in temporal or spiritual trouble?

Instance the Nobleman, whose son was at the point of death, who came and told Jesus, and with a bleeding heart entreated him, "Sir come down ere my child die." O! how was his heart cheered at the words of the Saviour, "Thy son liveth," (Jno. iv. 46.) Look at the terrified disciples in the night storm, when they awoke him and cried, "Lord save us, we

perish!" He rebuked the winds and waves and there was a great calm. The help was commensurate with the danger. There was a great tempest and then a great calm. Thus will it ever be, his help will be commensurate with our wants. If great the danger, great will be his help. In John's Gospel in the 9th chapter, we have examples grouped, or rather linked together like a string of pearls, sparkling each one with the radiance of the Saviour's grace and mercy, to cheer the heart's of the distressed.

The ruler's daughter—"My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay thy hand upon her and she shall live," and Jesus went in and took her by the hand and the child arose and lived.

The two blind men by the wayside told their tale of woe, and He touched their eyes and they received their sight.

The dumb man, whose tongue was loosed.

The New Testament is full of examples of the willingness of Jesus to help and readiness to listen to their tales of woe, and of the sympathy which he manifested and the aid he bestowed.

The lepers he healed—at one place one, at another ten.

The man at the Pool of Bethesda—the restoring

the man with the withered hand. Never did he turn a deaf ear to the tale of suffering humanity. What an encouragement to go and tell Jesus our troubles and trials whatever they may be. The troubles of those who came to Jesus were of different kinds, but that made no difference with him.

Our fellowmen are often wanting in sympathy. Their patience is soon exhausted. They are often too much absorbed in business, they can't attend to us. Some are beneath their notice, they often upbraid us and treat us harshly. But Jesus upbraideth not, He is ever ready and at leisure to listen to our complaints. His heart is full of pity and compassion. He even presses us to make free with him and invites all who are burdened with any trouble to come to him, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is both his invitation and assurance.

There are few in this world who have not some trouble and trial. It may not be proper, in many cases to unbosom themselves to their fellowmen, they don't understand your case and may by their want of sympathy and in many instances by their cold heartlessness but render the burden more heavy and harder to bear. But you cannot go amiss, when you unbosom yourselves to the sympathizing Saviour.

Has some loved one been unexpectedly taken away from you ? some one dear to you as your own life, with whom you shared many joys and sorrows ? Were they props upon which you leaned ? Is the pathway before you dark ? Do you feel as did John's disciples, when they took the headless body of their teacher to the grave ? Keep not your trouble locked up in your bosom, but go and unburden your wounded hearts to Jesus ; go and tell him, who wept at the grave of Lazarus and sympathized with the weeping sisters and comforted them in their distress, and you will find that he is the same as ever.

Has your heart's bitterness been known only to yourself, arising from anxiety on account of your children, or from the failure of your plans and purposes in life, from reverses in business, from the defection of friends, from difficulties and trials, which you feel not at liberty to make known to your friends and who if you could, would not be able or disposed to aid you ? There is nothing that you dare not tell Jesus, for in his word he tells us not to be cast down and dispirited. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God," (Phil. iv. 6).

Christian, have you difficulties in your pathway,

from surrounding circumstances in life ? Are these obstacles placed in your way by pretended friends, or by open enemies, must you bear the obloquy and reproach of men ? Have you at times to struggle with doubts and fears and contend with lingering corruptions, or rising sinful feelings ? Go in all child-like sympathy and spread them all out before the Master, look to him for sympathy and help and you can not be disappointed. He tells you, "My grace is sufficient." Are you a backslider, has your love grown cold and your service become formal, has your interest and enjoyment in spiritual things flagged, your attachment to the church and Sunday School vaned ? And conscious of and lamenting this, do you sigh ?

Oh ! that I were as heretofore,  
When warm in my first love,  
I only lived my God to adore  
And sought the things above,

Go and tell Jesus, bring your complaint before him and he can bring back, enkindle your love and renew your former attachment, "Return unto the Lord and he will have mercy, and to our God, and He will abundantly pardon."

Are you an awakened sinner overwhelmed with a sense of your guilt and danger, and tremblingly asking, what must I do ? Whither can I flee ?



Go tell the Saviour thy tale of woe ! Press thy  
suit, tell him, "Other refuge, Lord Jesus, have I  
none, but thee. Come, saying, without one plea,

Save that, the Lord has died for me,  
And that thou bidst me come to thee,  
Dear Lamb, of God, I come, I come.

And your's is the promise, "Him that cometh  
unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

## THE ATTRACTIVE INFLUENCE OF JESUS.

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**TEXT.**—And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus. Mark vi. 30.

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At first view, there appears nothing in this passage, but the relation of an ordinary historical fact. Yet there is an undercurrent of thought, stirring up and enkindling feelings and desires, akin to those which influenced the apostles to gather themselves unto Jesus. This event is historically connected with the beheading of John in prison at the command of Herod.

The death of their teacher no doubt, deeply affected his disciples. They could scarcely realize it, and we may well imagine, that they were overwhelmed with grief, and sought for consolation. But to whom could they fly but to Him, who, so often sympathized with them in their distress, and comforted their hearts in days of sorrow? Hence it is said in simple, but emphatically impressive language, "They went and told Jesus." They had learned to know him, as one ever ready to help, and hastened to unburden themselves of their grief, and tell him their tale of woe.

What an example and encouragement to grief-stricken and burdened souls to go and tell Jesus their trouble.

In a similar manner the apostles were drawn together to Jesus. They had been sent out into different countries to preach the glad tidings of salvation, and no doubt met with many trials and difficulties, and had not Jesus with them to direct and comfort them. Knowing by past experience the character of their Lord, they were drawn to him by the attractive influence of his sympathy and love. It is worthy of note that though they were far apart, in different sections of country, yet they all felt, and at the same time this attractive influence, and gathered themselves together to him. When they felt this drawing, nothing, neither distance nor the perils of the journey could keep them away, the same feeling thrilled and animated all. How different the conduct of many burdened, sorrowing souls, under the drawings of a Saviour's love; what a hesitancy; they are kept back, by doubts, tears, and difficulties. Let such imitate the example of the apostles; regardless of all difficulties, "They gathered themselves together unto Jesus."

The simple, plain fact stated in the text, does not strike us as important; but the question, what

influenced and constrained them, is of great importance, for similar causes should produce like effects.

We would attempt to answer the inquiry, what constrained the apostles thus to gather themselves to Jesus ?

I. *There was an attractive influence in Jesus to draw them.*

II. *There was a felt sense of need in themselves to urge them.*

Jesus Christ is the centre, sum and substance of all revealed religion. To Him the prophecies of the Old Testament pointed ; in him they were fulfilled. The offerings and sacrifices, were but typical of his great efficacious sacrifice. "For to him, gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sin," (Acts x. 43). The same truth is stated by Peter, (1 Pet. i. 10,) "Of which salvation, the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." Christ was the central point between the Old and New Testament, substantiating and giving virtue and efficacy to both. He is the sun of our whole system of religion, casting rays of light and heat all around ; backwards o'er the past ages, giving vitality and power to the teachings of the prophets, and forwards

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to enlighten the ages yet to come. Hence he came in the fullness of time, when all the prophecies relating to him were fulfilled, proving him to be indeed the promised Messiah. There is everything in the character of Christ calculated to attract.

*a Dwell upon his character*, so pure, uncontaminated with the feelings, habits and practices of those around him, standing alone unequalled in the purity of his life. Is there nothing attractive in this ?

*b Meditate upon the deep sympathy he felt for the poor and suffering.* No class so low, as to be beneath his regard, none so degraded whom he was not willing to help.

*c When the thousands around him were famishing in a desert place, his soul was stirred within him, his sympathy was called forth, and by a display of his boundless compassion and his mighty power, he feeds the multitude.* Is there nothing attractive in this ?

*d Behold His meek and uncomplaining spirit in the midst of calumny, reproach and persecution.* When bending under the weight of the cross, followed by a vast multitude, hearing the sympathizing women bewailing and lamenting him, forgetful of self and of his impending death, He said unto

them, "Ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." Is their nothing attractive in this ?

The warrior hero, to obtain renown and glory, tracks and deluges his march with the blood of the slain, whilst the Saviour's pathway through life was marked with deeds of kindness, love and mercy towards friends and foes, and to crown all, he seals his mission by sacrificing his life for the salvation of a lost and ruined world.

Now I ask again, is there nothing winning and attractive in the contemplation of such a character ? No wonder that the apostles "Gathered themselves together to Jesus."

My brethren, Jesus is the spiritual magnetic lodestone to draw the lost and perishing world to himself, for he says "And I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men to myself."

The lodestone is a magnetic one, there is nothing in its external appearance to admire, an ordinary person would pass it by without notice, but those who know its properties, and its power of attraction esteem it of great value.

So to the unthinking world, Christ had no form nor comeliness. "There was no beauty that they should desire him, nay, he was despised and rejected

of men, they hid their faces from him." Yet there is in him a divine attractive power, the power of love and grace. When men once have a realizing view of his character and of their own wants, they will be drawn to him and gather themselves together unto him, as did the apostles of old.

The lodestone, however, attracts only metals of a similar character with itself. Hence Christ, that he might draw a world unto himself, took upon himself human nature.

Not only so, but the loadstone imparts its own nature to metals of a similar general character with itself; it magnetises them. So Jesus imparts his own nature, mind and spirit to those that are brought under his divine and saving influence.

In addition to this: The lodestone does not only magnetize other substances, but imparts, to such substances the power to magnetize others in their turn. It is thus that the most powerful, magnets of iron and steel are formed. Thus Christ also enables, qualifies and disposes those who have been brought under his divine influences to draw others unto him.

O blessed Saviour, draw one and all of us with the cords of love as with the bands of a man, that

we may freely run after Thee, and help us in our turn to draw others unto thee.

Independent of, or rather in addition to this attractive influence in Jesus, there was also with the apostles themselves,

II. *A felt sense of their wants and need to urge them to assemble themselves together unto Jesus.*

They had now, for some time been absent from him and felt their need of his counsel and aid. They no doubt thought of their delightful intercourse with him in times past. They seemed to hear his voice addressing them in words of cheer, amidst their trials and difficulties. Perhaps they thought of his stilling the tempest on the sea, or of his laying hold of sinking Peter. They thought of him calming their hearts when cast down, sorrowful and perplexed about his death. It was like oil upon the troubled waters, when he said, "Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also on me." All these reminiscences, created a longing desire to see him again. They felt the want of his counsel and encouragement, amidst their trials. It was a felt want, a longing, a craving of the soul, which none but Jesus could satisfy.

Thus drawn by the attractive influence of his character, and urged by a felt want of their souls,



"The apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus."

Ah, my brethren, when men once learn rightly to appreciate the character of Jesus, and to realize themselves, as in a lost and perishing condition, when they see the insufficiency of all earthly things to satisfy the longings of the immortal spirit, that Jesus alone can satisfy their wants, then will they be constrained like the apostles, "To gather themselves together to Jesus."

It is a felt want of humanity. It is a longing for rest, from the cares and anxieties which perplex us. It is human woe, seeking for relief. It is the perishing and lost, longing for salvation, which urges and constrains those who feel their wants, "To gather themselves unto Jesus."

May we all under a sense of our need, influenced by the preciousness, the infinite love of Jesus, be attracted to him, and by our need be urged to draw near to him, that out of his abundant fullness we may obtain grace for grace.

## SACRAMENTAL ADDRESS.

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TEXT.—That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Eph. iii. 18, 19.

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We are met in this house of God, on the present occasion, under no ordinary circumstances, not merely to preach and hear the word. This place, in which we are assembled is rendered doubly sacred. The duty to which we are called, is one, the most impressive, the privilege the most exalted, which can be granted to mortals, and the blessings flowing from it, such as God in Christ only can give.

To direct the contemplation of our minds, to engage the affections of our hearts, to draw out our desires after Christ and to set forth the obligations under which we are to him, we have chosen a part of the prayer of the apostle in behalf of the Ephesian converts. This prayer is characterized by uncommon sublimity and power.

It savors of one, who held close communion with heaven, one on whose affections earth had no hold. His soul is set on fire by the contemplation of the boundless love and free grace of Jesus Christ,

He rises above the world, He asks for no blessings of time, he seems to sit under the cross, the irradiations of his Saviour's love warm and fire his soul, and he prays that they may be able to comprehend with all saints, "What is the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of God in Christ Jesus."

This, brethren and sisters, is my prayer for you to-day.

Human love is often inconstant and fickle and turned to neglect and hatred, and even if constant, continues only until death.

Come, then, let us contemplate a love whose power to bless, language can not describe, which ever remains constant, which death cannot rob us of, which eternity will enkindle but the more.

I. *It is a depth of love.*

Mark the expression, think of it, it reaches down to men in the lowest sphere of life, wealth and grandeur cannot purchase it, and indigence and want are no barriers in the way of its influence. I may be poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks of me.

It is a depth of love. It reaches to the lowest abyss of wretchedness, the lowest depth into which the fall could sink man. When the child of God thinks of this, overpowered by the thought, he is constrained to exclaim, O the depth! Who can fathom

it? How astonishing this love, which brought the Saviour from the throne of glory to the manger, from reclining on the bosom of the Father, to agonize in anguish and blood in the garden and on the cross.

II. *It is a height of love--Dwell on this height.*

To what height of privilege does it raise us, to become subjects of Christ's kingdom, sons of God, heirs of eternal life. To what excellence does it call us, to a participation of the divine nature. So high is this love, that it will raise every object of it to sit where he is, and walk the golden streets with him in the paradise of God.

You may have stood by the couch of the dying christian, rising above all that is earthly, above the fear of death, longing to be absent from the body and to be present with Christ. You may in imagination behold him in glory, with his golden harp attuned to heavenly lays; what has raised him to this height? The love of Christ. It is so high, that it raises all to the fountain head from which it flows.

III. *It is called a breadth of love.*

Meditate upon this breadth. Its influence is broad as the air. The isles of the sea are reached by it, it causes them to wait for his law. It reaches the burning desert, and Etheopia stretches forth her

hand. It extends to the regions of perpetual snow, and amidst the most piercing cold, causes the hearts of the Greenlander and Esquimo to kindle and warm and burn. "In him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed and he shall gather his elect from the four winds of heaven."

IV. *It is a length of love—Think of it !*

It reaches from age to age. The cord-strings of the Saviour's heart, have never been broken by extension. Its pulsations have never yet ceased.

Ever since a Simeon's heart was touched and fired by it, since Martha and Mary and Lazarus felt its influence, since Paul was taught its preciousness, since Lydia's heart felt its power, it has been lengthening out, and like the covenant rainbow of promise, it spans the whole earth.

You may have sighed over the inconstancy of earthly friends ; here is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. You may have wept at the grave, where the love of the kindest heart is now perished, but I tell you, the once dead, but now risen and glorified Redeemer, shall never die again.

This love we are about to celebrate, not merely by a well written and ably pronounced eulogy, not only in song, but at his table.

At every communion season, the house of God

receives a new consecration by the invisible, but not less real presence of the Master, and every sincere communicant receives a new baptism of the Holy Ghost.

If the Lord is present where two or three are assembled for his worship—will the Master of the feast not be specially present at the feast of his own preparing, to which he so graciously invites us? Ah, Brethren, in looking around upon this audience, methinks I notice in your countenances that you are persuaded and feel that he is present, else why this intense feeling, this awful silence, broken only by sighs and tears?

At His table, the Saviour sets forth under the significant emblems of bread, the indispensable staff of life, and of wine, the richest, animating, quickening luxury of life, the fullness and satisfying nature of the grace of God in Christ Jesus: Its height, depth, length and breadth.

In this ordinance Christ crucified, is set forth as the bread of life for the soul, and the source of the rich animating soulsatisfying influences of his grace, and all this is not only set forth, but offered and bestowed upon the contrite and believing.

Brethren, we can't believe that there is nothing here but a symbolical representation. Will the Lord

not really and truly give what He symbolically represents? Will He mock us by exciting hopes, and then disappoint us? Will He hold the cup to our lips, and then when we are about to drink, dash it from us? Never! never! no never!

At His table, Jesus is desirous of imparting all you need. It is a feast of fat things—a royal feast. At a feast given by a king, we expect the provision will be such as becomes his character.

So Jesus at his feast makes provision suitable to his character. A king may give as a king, but Jesus Christ gives as God only can give. He gives himself, with all he is and all he has.

When Esther, the Queen, appeared before Ahasuerus, he held out the golden sceptre and when she drew near and touched the top of it, the king said unto her, "What wilt thou, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? It shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom."

At his table Jesus holds forth the golden sceptre of his grace, steeped in, and yet reeking with his blood, Who is willing to touch and embrace it? His inquiry is, what wilt thou? What is thy request?

Be not afraid—you can't desire nor ask too much. It shall be given to you, not merely to the half of his kingdom, but to all he has to give; for

he will give grace here and glory hereafter, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Come then, with all your wants and wounds

Your every burden bring,

Here love, unchanging love abounds,

A deep celestial spring.

Poor, thirsty, sinful, fainting souls,

Are freely welcome here,

Salvation like a river rolls,

Abundant free and clear.



## GOD THE PROPRIETOR AND OWNER OF ALL.

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TEXT.—The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.  
The world and all that dwell therein. Psalm xxiv. 1.

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In these words the Psalmist sets forth, that God is the proprietor of all that He has made, that He claims it as his own and that all shall ultimately be consecrated to his service. That God has a legal right to all he has created, will be called in question by none, but the boasting infidel and the bold and daring scorner. It is a truth, taught by reason and established by Scripture.

This truth is represented by the Psalmist in (Psa. xcv.) to be a source of joy and comfort to God's people.

He had his heart stirred within him and his mind deeply impressed with the greatness, glory and goodness of God ; as he contemplates the vastness of his works, he exultingly breaks forth, "Let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods. In his hands are the deep places of the earth. The strength of

the hills is his also, the sea is his and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land." We consider the general truth asserted.

I. *That God is the proprietor and owner of all.*

II. *That all should and will ultimately be consecrated to his service.*

The phraseology of the text is peculiar and claims our attention.

When he says, "The earth is the Lord's," he alludes to the material, the natural, and the physical world.

When he speaks of the "Fullness thereof," he includes the soil with its productive powers.

The mountains and forests, loaded with timber for every needed use, and teeming with all kinds of game.

The bowels of the earth, with their priceless ores.

The mighty oceans teeming with living creatures as food for man, and affording a highway for commerce. The cattle that roam the forests and range on the thousand hills. The earth with all pertaining to it, is the Lords, for he hath made it, and he reserves to himself the proprietorship of all things, and only lends them to men as stewards and

tenants, for the use or abuse of which he will hold them to a strict account.

By the world, as distinguished from the earth, we are to understand the intellectual and moral world. The inhabitants of the earth, the whole human race, with all their enterprises, activities, discoveries, improvements in the arts and sciences. The undertakings of men, astounding as they are.

The increased facilities in business; the rapid strides of commerce between the remotest parts of the earth; the development of the treasures in the bowels of the earth; the railroads bringing into close proximity the most distant places; the telegraph, leaping o'er mountains and through vast seas; the gigantic tunnels, piercing through mighty mountain barriers; all are the Lord's; all devised and constructed by men to whom God has given powers to devise and plan, and means to carry out these enterprises. He is the absolute proprietor of them all, and as such has a right to and claims, yea, demands a portion of his interest in them, for the promotion of his glory and the spread of righteousness and truth throughout the world. We live in a remarkable age. In the last century the world has made more progress than perhaps in all the precious ages.

together. When we reflect upon these things it seems almost like a dream. Discoveries, inventions, enterprises the most astounding, almost bewildering us.

He that does not recognize the hand of God in all this, and ascribes all to the ingenuity and enterprise of man alone, must either be wilfully blind or desperately wicked. I think these things are but foreshadowings of the great things which God intends yet to accomplish in the world. They are but agencies which God, no doubt, intends to employ to accomplish some great ends and purposes in the future. They may be but the morning dawn—the ushering in of the millennium, when God shall take to himself his great power and subdue all things to himself.

There is yet another distinctive idea in the text, when the Psalmist says, “The earth,” the natural world, the inhabitants of the world, the human race, he adds, “and all that dwell therein.” Having alluded to the earth, with all its fullness, all belonging to it and of the world, the whole human race, with their powers and capabilities, he appears to apply the same truth to individuals, as though he wished to say, every individual that dwells therein. All men properly belong to God. They are the

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workmanship of his hands, all they are, and all they have is from him, their powers of body and faculties of the soul. These are not their own, to use them as they please, only for their own gratification, self-interest or self-indulgence. They who employ the powers and gifts of God contrary to his will, manifest a contempt of God and live in open rebellion against their lawful sovereign and will surely be called to a strict account.

Independent of the right which God has to the affectionate regard of every one, from the consideration of his being their Creator, he has still a stronger claim upon us from the fact, that he has redeemed and purchased us by the sacrifice and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was this, which the Apostle urged, with the Corinthians, (1 Cor. vi. 20,) "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." But how many are there, who not only rob God of his just due, of themselves, with all they are and have, but also prostitute their powers and means to the basest of purposes, in direct opposition to God. Now whilst men are willing to admit the truth in theory, that God has a sovereign right in them, they deny it in fact, they live as they list; they indignantly exclaim,

“What is the Almighty, that we should serve him, and what profit should we have if we pray unto him ?” (Job xxi. 15.)

II. *We next consider the language of the text as prophetic. That the earth and the fullness of it, the world and all that dwell therein, shall ultimately be consecrated to God.*

Whilst men are willing to admit, that in a general sense, all things belong to God, yet they cannot be brought to admit that all these things shall be enlisted in the service of God; that they shall be made to redound to his glory ; that He shall reap a revenue of praise from them.

This, however, is clearly intimated in the Psalm from which our text is taken. If it were not so, why the joyous exclamation ? “Lift up your heads, O ! ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors and the king of glory shall come in,” (verse 7.) It is clearly predicted that in the latter days, “the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever,” (Rev. xi. 15.) However improbable this may seem to men, however contrary to the conceptions of human reason, yet it shall be, for the mouth

of the Lord has spoken it. The morning of that day is already dawning.

The Lord is now gathering a people to serve him. Men of mighty intellect, are consecrating their intellect to God, men of influence are laying it at Jesus feet; men of wealth are offering it upon God's altar; thousands are awaking from their slumber and yielding themselves as willing offerings to the blessed Saviour, and christians baptized with a renewed Baptism of the Holy Ghost, are making a more unreserved consecration of all they are and have to God.

And can any one of a sound mind, not dead to a sense of all obligation to gratitude, affection and duty, array himself against God's infinite grace and against the power of his omnipotence? The earth and the fullness thereof shall be consecrated to God. What mean those sacrifices of the Old Testament dispensation, of the fruits of the earth, the grain, oil, wine, the choice fruits of the earth, the choice first-fruits of all to be offered unto the Lord? They teach us that whilst the fruits of the harvest are to be gathered with feelings of gratitude to the giver, that a portion of them are to be set apart for the cause of God, of charity, of religion. Think of this, ye whom God has richly blessed with the in-

crease of the harvest. Of the Jews the Lord required, "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first-fruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." And will He require less of professed christians?

But the activities, enterprises, the business, the discoveries, the mighty undertakings of the present age shall in some way, and to some extent be consecrated to God, for, "The world and all that dwell therein, are His," and He demands his share of interest in the labor of his tenants.

How some of these enterprises shall be made tributary to God's glory and the extension of Christ's Kingdom, we may not yet fully be able to see, but he claims them as his own, and he will not suffer them only to subserve the purposes of men for this world, only to foster pride, sinful indulgences and ungodliness. God will not forego his claim and let Satan and men have all the benefit of them. It would indeed appear at times, as though God did not care how men spent the gifts of his goodness, and the increase of their enterprises and toils. But the end is not yet. Some are already reaping the reward of robbing God in the disobedience, and the trouble and heartaches which their children



cause them. 'If they had but given to the cause of God the hundredth, yea, the thousandth part of what they have given them for their indulgences and pride, they might have saved themselves many bitter tears and anxious sighs, many sorrowful days and sleepless nights. But the leaven of grace is working slowly, but surely.

It is working upon the hearts of men, who have made princely fortunes by the increased facilities in business, so that they are building houses for the the poor at a nominal rent ; others are liberally endowing institutions of learning ; others establishing and aiding assylums for the suffering of every kind, the widow, the orphan, the deaf and blind. Commerce is being sanctified, vessels are so far being pressed into the service, that the owners will have none but pious captains, and the captains will engage no drunkards or profane swearers. So that instead of the constant broils, the drunken revelries, the horrid oaths, the obscene songs, you now hear the voice of prayer and thanksgiving, and these men, when they arrive at different ports, by their example and deportment exert a most happy, blessed and wide spreading influence.

Railroads may furnish facilities for reaching distant points, carrying the living minister and the

word of life to the dwellers upon the mountains and the prairies.

The telegraph may yet flash the news of salvation from place to place and electrify and cheer the hearts of christians at distant points. Mighty mountains shall not much longer hinder the speed of the gospel chariot, nor keep men in selfish isolation, but unite Christians, so that their hearts may beat in unison with each other, that they may consult, plan and act to carry on the work of the Lord. God is removing hindrances in the way of the spread of his kingdom. He is opening doors on every side for the entrance of the gospel.

Thus all gigantic enterprises of the age may yet be enlisted in the cause of the Lord, and many of the pleasures and enjoyments of men may yet be sanctified and hallowed.

The prophet Zechariah, speaking of the latter times, says in that day even worldly pleasures shall be sanctified, and that upon the bells of the horses shall be inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord."

All things belong to God, "The earth with all its productions—yea the very fullness thereof."

The world, the intelligent world, the whole human race, with all their enterprises, and discoveries, every individual of the race belongs to God.

Who will dare to rob God of themselves ? Who will dare to deny his claims upon them ? God claims your heart's affections, the powers of your body, your influence, a part of the increase of your fields, a part of the profit of your business. God has and claims a right to you and all you have, and no one will dare to deny this, and at his own peril refuse to give God his own.

When in faith and hope, we look forward to the time, when the earth and all appertaining to it, the world of mankind, yea every individual of the human race with all they are and possess, shall be enlisted in the cause of truth and righteousness. What christian is not constrained to exclaim ?

"Lord for those days we wait,  
Those days are in thy word foretold.  
Fly swifter sun and stars and bring,  
This promised age of gold."

## DESPISING REPROOFS.

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TEXT.—He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Prov. xxix. 4.

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The text sets forth the folly and dreadful consequences of despising, and treating the reproofs of the Almighty with indifference and contempt.

God makes use of all possible methods to win men from their course of sin and folly, by the most cheering promises, and the most alarming threatenings. By intreaties, expostulations, by rebukings and reproofs. And this he does again and again, often, as is intimated in the text, and yet all these efforts are disregarded and treated with contempt, men set themselves stubbornly against them. Though impressions may be made upon their minds and consciences, yet they counteract them and continue in their course of sin and iniquity. We consider,

The folly and danger of spurning and disregarding God's reproofs.

- I. *The reproofs of God, or how God reproveth.*
- II. *How they are disregarded.*
- III. *The inevitable consequences.*

To reprove is to check or rebuke, for a wrong course of conduct, or for particular improper and sinful actions, setting forth the impropriety and wickedness of such a course, to convince men of the wrong, in order to lead them to repentance. Men often rebuke their fellow-men in anger and displeasure, for their opposition to advice and counsel, and do this in harsh language, and thus rather provoke and harden, instead of gaining and winning.

God rebukes in love and mercy, to soften the heart and win men from the error of their ways. Thus he rebuked the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that were sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings? and ye would not."

God reproves sinners by contrasting his ardent desire for their salvation, with their neglect of him. "Say unto them, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his evil ways and live, turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways. For, why will he die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

God reproves especially the young, through parents and friends. How often have parents in the most urgent and affectionate manner, reproved their

children for their follies and sinful conduct, their disobedience, their neglect of God and of religion? that we would imagine, they could not possibly disregard their well meant reproofs. O think of these reproofs, so affectionately administered, and so wilfully and stubbornly disregarded.

God reproofs by his Providences. By suffering men to reap the consequences of their folly, and setting before them in the example of others, the degradation and ruin which have followed a course of sin, to warn them of their danger. He reproofs men through their own conscience.

God has placed an inward monitor in every man's breast, which, unless perverted by wrong teaching, or blunted by constantly stifling its voice, will approve of that which is right, or condemn that which is wrong.

How often has conscience startled us after we have neglected a known duty, or done that which we knew to be wrong? Conscience is like a faithful watchman, standing at our side when tempted to do wrong, crying, stop! take heed! And when a flagrant action has been committed, men fly from all the endearments of home, from the place where they committed the deed—but they can't fly from conscience.

"The wicked fleeth, when no man pursueth." Every one carries with him a secret and faithful witness, to testify for or against him. From this he cannot hide or escape, when men are about to commit a crime, they look around to see if there is any one looking, any witness of their crime, to testify against them. Here is a witness they can't escape from, they carry it with them constantly, and should heed its warnings and reproofs. Stand in awe of your own conscience, and let your prayer be,

"What conscience dictates to be done,  
Or warns me not to do,  
This teach me more than hell to shun,  
That, more than heaven pursue."

God reprove through his word, especially when that word is made effectual by the Holy Ghost. The scriptures are full of reprovings against sin, and warnings against temptations to sin, and when brought to bear upon the conscience these have occasioned the most pungent self-reproach, "How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me," (Prov. v. 12, 13.)

Their sins have been set before them, fair warnings of the consequences given, but with many, all in vain. They are like the stubborn ox, which

refuses to bend his neck to the yoke and must be forced by blows to submit.

## II. How these reproofs are disregarded.

Men generally, do not deny the reasonableness and justice of these reproofs, a sense of their guilt forces them to admit this, yet contrary to their better convictions, they not only slight them, but obstinately, array themselves against them. Now a mere heedless neglect of a well meant advice, or reproof argues a disregard for the person who gives it, but a wilful, stubborn resistance is an insult to the Almighty.

The reproofs of God through kind parents. Though at first they make a deep impression, yet as they are disregarded, these impressions become weaker and weaker. The authority of parents is at last practically denied. There is at first a hesitation, and then a bold presumptuous, ignoring of all the counsel and reproof, a restlessness under parental restraint, and then a hardening the heart against all reproof, and a bold and daring defiance of parental authority, and slighting of parental affection, and like a vessel torn from her moorings, without a pilot and steersman, is tossed to and fro and wrecked; so are the young who despise the reproofs of parents, cut loose from all restraints, and run riot



in wickedness. Prospects in life are blighted, reputation and character gone, and the soul lost without redemption.

O, how many unavailing regrets will harrass the soul in after life, and the cry of despair and the wail of anguish will be forced from many, "How have I hated instruction and despised reproof," (Prov. v. 12.)

This is a sin of double dye, against parents, whom we are to honor, and against God, who has constituted these parents as our guardians and guides.

The same holds true in regard to the reproofs of conscience. Men tamper with its reproofs set themselves in opposition to its claims, rob it of its power by frequent resistance, so that its voice becomes feeble and feebler, and at last is silenced altogether, until unrestrained, they are led to commit the most heinous crimes without trembling.

But though asleep, conscience is not dead, but only slumbering, and like the storm cloud, is slowly but surely gathering strength, until at last in its fury, it shoots forth its scathing lightning and its devastating flood. So conscience will assert its power, and if it be not until upon a death bed or in hell.

III. The inevitable consequences of disregarding the reproofs of God.

The consequences of thus resisting and counteracting the reproofs of God, are often even for this world, of the most dreadful and alarming character. Look at that young man, boldly setting himself against the counsel, advice and reproofs of his parents, against the convictions of his conscience, the wooings of the spirit of God and the instructions of God's holy word, gradually breaking through every restraint thrown around him, running the rounds of folly and sin, losing all self-respect, the respect and confidence of all whose respect is worth regarding. Ruining character, credit and health, and finds himself ere he is aware, in poverty and disgrace, and often brings himself to a sudden, premature and ignominious death.

Again, by resisting the reproofs of God, men deaden every virtuous sensibility, every good emotion, harden their hearts, grieve the Spirit of God, and bring themselves into the state of some among the Ephesians, of whom the apostle says, "Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness," (Eph. v. 19.)

But again, who can calculate the consequences

which will follow in the world to come? Then the unavailing regret will be wrung from their condemned and agonizing souls, "How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me," (Prov. v. 12.) And this may come upon them suddenly, in an unexpected moment. Amidst their carnal security, when they cry peace, sudden destruction shall come upon them, "They shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy."

They have wilfully set themselves against every effort to save them, resisted invitations the most kind and gracious, against threatenings the most alarming, reproofs the most tender and startling, wilfully and deliberately despised the only remedy which God devised for their salvation. Where can they find another remedy? "There is no other name under heaven, given unto men whereby they can be saved, but the name of Jesus."

The apostle (Heb. x. 26,) teaches, "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries," (Heb. x. 26, 27.)

## THE DIFFERENT FEELINGS WITH WHICH MEN RETURN TO THEIR HOMES.

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TEXT.—And every man went unto his own house. Jno. vii. 53.

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These words in themselves, abstractly considered, contain no important truth. The fact that every one went to his own home, does not strike us as anything strange, it is what we naturally would expect. But the animus, the feelings, with which every one went to his own home, stamps a significance upon the act. It is this which gives character to any action, however insignificant it may appear in itself.

It becomes us therefore to inquire, what was the mind and the feeling which pervaded the multitude when each returned to his own house.

The attending circumstances, will clearly exhibit in what frame of mind every one returned to his home. The great feast of tabernacles was at hand, on which occasion a great multitude had assembled at Jerusalem. At this feast the Jews, knowing that Jesus would be there, sought to stir up the common people against him. But when the people

heard him, "Though no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews," there was a murmuring among them, some said, he is a good man and others said, "Nay, but he deceiveth the people." Failing in this attempt, the Pharisees and chief priests, by virtue of their authority, sent a deputation to apprehend him, but they also returned without him. Enraged at this second failure they asked, "Why have ye not brought him?" They answered, "Never man spake like this man." So there was a great division of sentiment, some clave to and sided with Jesus, and others, were filled with hatred against him, some were convinced and awakened, their hearts were pricked by the power of the truth and thus with these different feelings, in this different state of mind each went to his own home. It is worthy of note, that in the German translation, it is not merely stated every one went to his own house, but *thus* every one went to his own house.

We would present for our consideration, the different feelings and disposition of mind with which men return to their own homes.

- I. *From their business.*
- II. *From company.*
- III. *From the house of God.*
- IV. *From this world to their eternal home.*

Home, tis a word of sweetest sound, it possesses a charm, to awaken the reminiscences of the past. It brings back the age of childhood and youth. It recalls in all the business of early life, the memories of the sainted dead. Who, e'en in later days, when all other things are forgotten, does not think of home? Who is not constrained to exclaim, I love that dear old home, my mother lived and died there! Home, when it is what it should be, has an attractive influence. It is a refuge from the storms of life, from the toils and trials and perplexities of the day.

Behold the way-worn traveller, cheered on his journey by the thought of home as he is homeward bound. The weary laborer at the close of day, seeks the repose, rest and quiet of home. So Zion's pilgrims long for the home above. This too, was the case with the multitudes at Jerusalem, at the close of the great feast, every one went to his own house. But not every house affords a true home.

It is not the brick and mortar and furniture, however costly, which constitutes home, but loving hearts which beat in unison there, for without this there is no true home. Home is there, where affliction dwells, where love binds together kindred minds, where the happiness of one, is made the happiness

of all, where the only contention is who can most promote the happiness of the others.

In that house, where there are no loving hearts, no harmony of feeling, where hearts beat not in unison with heart, where there are bickerings, contention and strife, where those who return, are received with coldness and indifference, or themselves return, with a spirit chafed by the disappointments and vexations of the day, dissatisfied with every thing around them, with no smile or friendly greeting to those who would gladly welcome them, there, there is no home—nothing attractive, but all rather repulsive, hence many rather stay away, and seek elsewhere, what they cannot find at home. With different feelings the multitude returned from the feast, each one to his own home.

I. So many return from the avocations of life.

The day has passed, the hours of toil and business are over. Behold the multitude returning, the merchant from his store; the mechanic from his shop; the farmer from his plough in the furrow; the weary laborer from his place of toil, each one to his own home. But in what state of mind, with what emotions and feelings? Ah, could we know the sentiments, emotions and feelings, how great a difference would we find?

Some return with a heart swelling with gratitude to that God, whose kind Providence has watched over them, during another day, who has preserved the faculties of the mind and the power of the body to enable them to discharge the duties of their calling.

Others never think of a gracious superintending Providence, which has watched over them, nor cherish a single emotion of gratitude. Some return with the sweet consciousness of having neglected no known duty, of having wronged no one, of having exhibited no wrong temper, no discontent, malice and envy, of having spoken evil of none. Others return with the guilty consciousness of having wronged and taken advantage of others in business, exhibited angry feelings, and spoken ill of and slandered their neighbors. Some return with pleasurable emotions, with a holy delight to meet and greet the loved ones at home, to minister in every possible way to their happiness and to shed the sunlight of joy around the family hearth.

Another returns sullen, morose, dissatisfied with himself and others. Something has occurred during the day, which has soured his disposition, roused his temper, and he must needs reek his vengeance upon the innocent inmates of his home, and instead



of bringing joy and happiness, makes his house the abode of contention and sorrow. Some return to enjoy the social conversation of those whom they love, to contemplate the blessings they enjoy, to impart instruction and around the family altar to mingle their notes of praise and thanksgiving. Others care for none of these things. Some return with feelings of delight, knowing that they will be received with friendly greetings from loving hearts. Others return with fear and apprehensions, knowing that they will be received, with coldness and indifference, perhaps even with reproaches, with no smile and friendly greetings, to meet them.

II. Again, thus also men return from the company of their associates.

Man is created for social life. This is intended both for his happiness and his usefulness. Some of the sweetest and purest enjoyments on earth are those afforded us in our associations with our fellowmen. It is only thus the interests and welfare of a community can be best promoted, only by consultation and united efforts, that any moral, religious or secular enterprise can be advanced.

God himself has declared, "It is not good for man to be alone, hence He setteth the solitary in families," (Ps. lxxviii. 6.)

Separated from all intercourse with his fellow-men, man, will become morose and selfish, a mere drone in society, contributing nothing, either by example or act to the general good. But, we ought to be cautious, in regard to the society we choose, the associates we mingle with. The apostle says, (1 Cor. xv. 33,) "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and Solomon says, (Prov. xiii. 20,) "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Society has a moulding influence—characters are insensibly formed. We as naturally imbibe the moral as the natural atmosphere which we breathe. It exerts its influence upon the mind, the sentiments and opinions and principles, upon the heart, its affections and delights, and upon the life, the course of conduct.

It exerts this influence slowly and imperceptibly, but surely. Some are influenced thereby ere they are aware of it. How cautious therefore ought especially the young to be, in regard to the company they keep. We ought however also to be very cautious, how we conduct ourselves when in company; not to o'erleap the rules of propriety and decorum, both in our conversation and conduct.

True, we may be cheerful and engage in inno-



cent enjoyments, but the conversation and conduct of many is unbecoming, rude and offensive to others and calculated to destroy peace and harmony, promote, and excite evil passions. Such put a stain upon their own character, and do much harm.

Especially aught professing christians take heed how they deport themselves in company, that they bring not a stigma upon their own character, nor a reproach upon religion. It is however of great importance, in what frame of mind, with what feelings and dispositions we return from company to our own dwellings—our own home. Not as so many do, so full of the love of the world, its exciting pleasures and attractions and enticements, as to wean us from the more real, solid and pure enjoyments of home, or render these enjoyments insipid. None aught to return home under the excitement and influence of the intoxicating bowl, nor with a distracted state of mind, or so taken up with the enjoyments of the world as to render them unfitted for serious reflection, contemplation and prayer. Much less with a temper, soured and irritated by the occurrences of the day, and displaying their tempers in the family circle, and thus render the rest unhappy, but rather return with a cheerful and contented dis-

position, with a kind and affectionate regard for those whom we love, seeking a calm and sacred retreat, penetrated with a sense of the transitory nature of all earthly enjoyments, and a desire for that home on high, of which our present home is but a faint emblem.

III. Again, men return with different convictions and feelings from the house of God—from the preaching of the gospel.

It is a pleasant sight to see persons in regular attendance at the services of the sanctuary, the influence cannot but be salutary, when they hear the word with reverence and attention, treasure it up in their hearts and reduce it to practice in daily life. But how different the effects of the preached word upon different individuals.

This is clearly set forth in the parable of the "Sower." Some falls by the wayside, upon hearts hardened in sin, and Satan comes and distracts the mind and taketh away the word sown in their hearts. Others upon stony ground, who indeed receive the word with gladness, but who are fickle and without any moral principle, and soon it vanishes. Others among the thorns and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it becomes unfruitful.

But others on good ground, on attentive minds and willing hearts and bring forth, "Some thirty, some sixty and some an hundred fold."

Some with hearing ears, hear not, their minds are so engrossed and their hearts so filled with their occupations and the pleasures of the world, that when they leave the house of God they know scarcely anything that was said and no impression is left upon their hearts.

Others, are filled with prejudices against religion in general, against the word, or against the preacher, and return with indifference, displeasure and even with anger and malice wrangling in their bosom, they rail out against the church and preacher even before their children, thus hardening their hearts against the truth, a most pernicious practice.

Others, listen with attention, care and a feeling of deep interest, with application to themselves and with a resolve to practice what they hear. They return to contemplate the truth, to speak to those at home about their eternal interests. Thus, many often return from the house of God, and thus many will return this day.

O, if after the service we could look into the hearts of the hearers, how great a difference we would see in the feelings, convictions and the im-

pression with which men return from the house of God.

IV. With different views and feelings, many go from this world to their eternal home beyond.

"It is not all of life to live, nor all of death to die." There is another world to which we are hastening—an eternal home.

Some seek to banish from their minds all thoughts of the world beyond, and live only for this world, unconcerned about their eternal interests, they reject the proffered grace and the rich and free salvation, purchased and offered by Jesus Christ. Laden with the sins of many years, with hearts unchanged, filled with hatred to every thing good, they pass over to another world, a world of woe and eternal misery.

Others, make their eternal interests the chief concern of life ; esteem Christ and his grace above every thing else ; subject themselves to the control of God's word and spirit ; seek to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord—are filled with hope and thus pass over to their eternal home on high.

O, with what different feelings, in what a different state of mind do not men pass from time to eternity !

Some without any preparation at all, some

without even awaking from their delusion, without seeing or being aware of their danger, like a man dying in his midnight slumber, or like one sleeping in his berth in a sinking vessel, unconscious until he awakes to the reality of his condition in the world to come.

Others pass over with fear and dread, without the least ray of hope. And others again reposing calmly and sweetly upon an Almighty Saviour, pass over with joy and triumph. Let each one strive to make his dwelling what it ought to be—a home, a pleasant retreat from the business and cares and storms of life, banish from its sacred inclosure, strife and contention. Let it be the abode of loving hearts, of affection, of sympathy, where the only contention is who can best minister to the comfort and happiness of the others, where those who return from business or company, return with affection and are received with greetings of joy.

See to it, how ye return from the toils and business of life, with a good conscience, knowing that you have wronged no one, with gratitude to God for his goodness during the day, not with feelings of anger or discontent, but with delight and joy at meeting the loved ones, to shed the sunlight of joy around the family circle.

Be cautious what company you choose and how you conduct yourself whilst in company, and with what feelings you return.

Especially, be careful how you return from the house of God. Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, delivering your own souls." (James i. 21, 22.)

And O, see well to it with what feelings and in what state of mind you pass over to your eternal home beyond. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," (Math. vi. 33.)

Let your home be consecrated to God and religion, erect your family altars, and keep the fire of devotion ever alive, have the Saviour a constant abiding guest, then your home will be what it should be.



## THE FATAL RISK.

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TEXT.—His blood be upon us and our children. Math.  
xxvii. 24.

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These were the bold and daring words of the Jews, when they were clamoring and a thirsting for the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus was now arraigned before Pilate's bar, under the indictment of sedition, conspiring against the Roman government, setting himself up as king or ruler in the place of Cæsar, and for persuading the people not to pay their tribute or taxes.

He had already been accused by the chief Priests and Elders of heresy and blasphemy, and summoned before the Sanhedrim, (the highest court of the Jews.) For this, by suborning false witnesses, they condemned him. But nothing but his death could satisfy them, and knowing they had not the power to put him to death, they accused him before Pilate's bar for sedition.

They full well knew, that the Roman Court would not for a moment entertain the charge of heresy and blasphemy, therefore they dropped that plea and accused him of sedition.

Never in all the annals of history, do we find such a false charge, such an unjust accusation as that brought against Jesus Christ, nor was ever an accused person treated with such indignity before any civil tribunal. They sought and suborned false witnesses, but found none who could give any reliable proof. At last they found two of the baser sort, who were willing to swear to any thing, but all was of no avail. Filled with rage, they spit in his face, buffeted and smote him with the palms of their hands. Was ever prisoner even the worst of criminals, treated with such indignity before any court of justice, as was Jesus before this court.

Never was any man more unjustly condemned. Pilate said, "Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people, and behold ! I have examined him before you, and I have found no fault in him, touching those things whereof ye accuse him." Again he said, "What evil hath he done ?" (verse 23.) Convinced of his innocence, Pilate tried to save him, "For he knew that of envy they had delivered him," (verse 18.)

He was yet more perplexed by a dream which his wife had that day, who sent him word while he sat upon the bench, saying, "Have thou nothing to

do with this just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

He however, tried one more expedient, to save him. It was a custom at the time of the passover to release a prisoner. Now it so happened that there was a notable prisoner (a great criminal,) by the name of Barabbas in prison. This one Pilate set against Jesus, and said, which of the two will ye that I release unto you ? Barabbas or Jesus ? and they cried out, Barabbas ! Finding his efforts were in vain and that there was a great tumult, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." Then answered all the people, "His blood be upon us and our children." We are willing to be answerable for the guilt of putting him to death, and to bear the punishment of it, we'll run the risk.

Our theme is the fearful risk.

What right had these enemies of Jesus to entail upon their children the punishment due to themselves ? They must have known that their children would have to share their punishment. We shudder at the bold daring of this people assuming such a fearful risk. If we heard of a person, who by false accusation and suborning false witnesses, would cause an innocent person to be condemned and exe-

cuted, who when remonstrated with, would boldly declare, "I'll take the responsibility, I'll bear the guilt, his blood be upon me and my children." We could scarcely find language to express the enormity of the crime. But what is this, compared with the guilt of crucifying the Lord Jesus? But God took them at their word. What were the consequences they brought upon themselves and entailed upon their children? Let history tell.

In the (xxiv. Chap. John's Gospel,) the Saviour predicts the calamities, which would come upon them. Wars and rumors of wars constantly threatening them; scarcely had one ceased, in which thousands were slain, before another came. In a war with the Syrians twenty thousand were slain, at another incursion of Syrians, thirteen thousand. At Alexandria, the Jews and heathen fought, where fifty thousand Jews were slain, and then they were visited with famines, pestilence and earthquakes in divers places.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, who was an eyewitness, gives us a most heartrending description of the scenes at the destruction of Jerusalem. Thousands died by famine and disease and by the sword, and their blood ran in torrents so deep, that it extinguished the fire which was burning in the streets.

Thousands were crucified, suffering the same punishment they inflicted upon the Saviour.

Josephus says, "So many were crucified, that there were not crosses enough, nor space sufficient to put them up." Fearful the retribution they called down upon themselves ! To this very day the curse has remained ; as a nation they have been scattered among all people. No nation on earth has probably suffered so much. All governments of the earth have conspired to overwhelm them with calamity, even enlightened England until lately, disfranchised them, and even now in some of the governments of Europe they are awfully persecuted. In some cities there are Jews' quarters, where they must live. Only in our free and enlightened country they possess equal privileges, and yet they continue as a distinct people, live as monuments of the justice of God, evidences that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, and proofs of the crime which their fathers committed, in putting him to death, and of the risk, the fearful risk, which they assumed.

Brethren; we reprobate the conduct of the wicked Jews and tremble at the fearful judgments they brought upon themselves and their children. But are there not many in our day, who are as guilty, and more so, than they were ?

The apostle speaks of some, (1 Cor. xi. 28,) who are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, who do not realize the fact that he assumed our nature and shed his blood to redeem and save us, who reject him as the Saviour and will not be saved by him.

Again, (Heb. vi. 6,) He speaks of some who crucify to themselves the son of God afresh. They reject him, they will not come to him that they might have life.

Again, the apostle (Gal. iii. 1) reproves them for not receiving the truth, and strengthens this reproof by saying, that Jesus Christ had clearly been set forth among them as crucified. Now, has he not been set forth, declared and preached unto us crucified, as having died for us ; as the only name given among men whereby we can be saved. Now, in rejecting his offers of salvation, do we not make the cross of Christ of no effect, so far as we are concerned ? Wherein do we act better than the Jews ?

Nor will the effects be less dreadful. We may not indeed be visited with similiar temporal calamities to those with which the Jews were visited—war, pestilence and famine, etc. But such shall lose all the benefits of the death of Jesus, all the merits of his blood. They make his death of non-effect, as

far as they are concerned. They will remain in a state of condemnation, "For he that believeth not is condemned already." For there is no more (no other) sacrifice for sin. They will pierce themselves through with many sorrows, many fears and apprehensions. They will have a fearful looking for of judgment, and in eternity, what will be their destiny? Christ with all he is, is freely and often offered and urged upon their acceptance, the fearful consequences of rejection set forth, but by their actions if not by their words, they defiantly declare, we will risk it. O fearful risk!

And what renders their conduct so much more fearful is, they entail the consequences upon their children, they in fact say, "His blood be upon us and our children." Not as though their children necessarily partook of their guilt, yet by their example influence and precept they gradually, though unconsciously bad them to follow their conduct and thus involve them in the same guilt. If men will have no mercy upon themselves, let them for God's sake have mercy upon their children. Tell parents of this, and they say, "I'll risk it," and thousands have to their sorrow, found the sad effects upon their offspring, they have run, riot in wickedness and by their disobedience, disrespect, and immor-

ality have brought ruin upon themselves, disgrace upon their parents, and the grey heads of many have been brought down to the grave in sorrow by their childrens conduct.

Speak to the man engaged in an honorable business, making a comfortable living, who, allured by some of whom he has read or heard, who by some bold and daring speculation have suddenly become rich, forsakes his business, and ventures his all in similar hazards, speak to him and warn him, and he'll say, "I'll risk it."

Speak to the young man, son of respectable parents, reared under religious influences, who begins to associate with the careless and immoral, neglecting the house of God, desecrating the Lord's day, staying out late at night, sitting at the card-table or in drinking saloons, speak to him, warn him in the most affectionate and urgent manner, and he will arrogantly and insolently reply, "I can take care of myself, I'll risk it," and how fearful the risk they incurred is seen in their character and condition, even before they have reached the middle age of life they become vagrants, outcasts from society, character gone, health ruined, and the soul imperilled.

Who will dare to risk, rejecting and opposing the Saviour and his proffered mercy?



Pilate placed before the Jews, Barabbas, a representative of all that was vile and wicked, and Christ the Saviour, the innocent pure and holy, and left it to their choice, "Which of the twain will ye that I release unto you? and with one voice they cried, Barabbas! We shudder and tremble at the very thought. Before us are placed the pleasures of the world and sin and all they can give, and Jesus Christ and all the blessings he can bestow, and a greater than Pilate says, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

## CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

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(Sermon preached at the meeting of the General Synod, May 14, 1857, at Reading, Pa.)

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TEXT.—But we preach Christ crucified. 1 Cor. i. 23.

Fathers and brethren, members of the General Synod, I greet you in the language of the great apostel, "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

As presiding officer of the Synod it becomes my duty according to the provision of your constitution, to open the sessions of this meeting with the usual synodical sermon.

The apostle appears to lay a peculiar emphasis upon the words with which he introduces the text. "But we," evidently placing himself and his fellow-laborers in the gospel ministry in striking contrast to the far famed orators of the day, both as to the manner and matter of this preaching.

The Corinth of the New Testament had, at the time Paul wrote this epistle, rivaled, if not excelled, the ancient city of the same name. Being favorably situated, it commanded a great amount of trade by land,

and having a harbor on two sides, it became the commercial emporium of Greece. Activity in commercial pursuits, whilst it was accompanied with wealth, pride and luxury, attracted also a host of adventurers of every kind. Here were found Jews of all classes, from the opulent merchant to the lowest menial, with their peculiar religious views. Thither also, flocked the polished Greeks with their peculiar systems of philosophy, setting forth their views of securing the *summum bonum* (chief good.)

Corinth, we are told, abounded with able Jewish orators of their various sects, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, etc., also with profound heathen philosophers, who charmed and captivated immense audiences with the depth of their learning, fluency of diction and flowers of eloquence.

Now, in contrast to these the apostle says, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Some are of the opinion that by the peculiar stress the apostle places on the words, "*But we preach Christ crucified,*" he intended to convey a reproof to the church at Corinth. From various sources he had been made acquainted with the pain-

ful fact that the church had not only lost much of its spirituality, but had fallen into gross and scandalous improprieties. The apostle attributes this state of things in a great measure, to the contentions and party disputes among them. "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apolos, and I of Cephus, and I of Christ.

It would appear that the church was divided into four parties, each rallying under a particular leader, of Paul, Apollos, Cephus, (Peter) and Christ. What distinctive doctrinal views each of these parties maintained, whether fundamental or non-fundamental, it would at this remote period be difficult to determine.

It is probable, however, that some Jewish converts were desirous of retaining some of the ritual observances of the Mosaic Dispensation and engrafting them upon or embodying them with the Christian system. These called themselves the followers of Peter.

The apostle Paul, being violently opposed by these judaizing christians for rejecting all their long cherished rituals and adhering to the doctrines of a pure and spiritual christianity, would naturally lead his converts to adhere the more devotedly to him and espouse his views. With regard to Apollos,

there appears to have been perfect agreement of sentiment with him and Paul, and perhaps the only reason why a party preferred him, was because of his ornate and classic style and the fascinating powers of his eloquence. This (as is now too often the case) afforded more gratification to the refined taste of the more polished hearers, than the plain and simple preaching of Christ crucified, by the apostle Paul. With regard to the party who said they were of Christ, it is extremely difficult to say by what distinctive doctrinal views they were characterized.

Some imagine that these were the better class of christians, who did not at all meddle with or take part in the dispute. That this was not the case is evident, as the apostle reproves and censures them equally with the rest.

According to learned commentators (Neander Oldshausen) the Christian party consisted of persons, who, from a sanctimonious spirit, repudiated the authority and teachings of the apostles, and wrought out for themselves a system of religion from which they rejected everything which did not accord with their views, and which according to their philosophical minds appeared unreasonable and as a mere addition of men. Discarding therefore all other authority, they professedly appealed to Christ alone and

sought by their discriminating minds to form what they imagine a purer Christianity. These disturbers of the peace of the church, the apostle sternly rebuked by asking, is Christ divided, was Paul crucified for you? and then in our text says, "But we preach Christ crucified," all of us, Paul, Apollos and Cephas. Paul wished to clear their skirts from any blame of participating in their fruitless contentions; as detrimental to the spiritual interests of the church; as the fruitful cause of the decline of personal piety; as subversive of the great aim of the gospel ministry, and as parallizing all efforts for bringing the world in subjection to Him, whose right it is to reign, and who shall reign from the river to the ends of the earth.

Brethren, let us religiously guard against all contentions and party strife in the church. We can't afford it. We have a great work committed to our care—Souls around us are perishing; God's people are to be built up in their most holy faith; inquirers to be led to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; our seminaries are languishing; God in his Providence is casting upon our shores, thousands of emigrants from the fatherland to be cared for by us; our Foreign Missions imperiously demand our united energies.

I say again we can't afford to be split up into parties.

It on the one hand, some plead for ritual observances, on the other some would discard all the authority of the past ages, let us reprove them, as did the apostle those of his days, in the emphatic language of the text, "But we preach Christ and him crucified," as the only ground of the sinners hope of acceptance with God.

If any one would ask me, which is the peculiar and distinctive doctrine of the Lutheran church, I would reply, that for which Luther so manfully contended "Justification by faith." Her glory and safety has ever consisted in adhering to the christian principle, "In essentials unity—Liberty in nonessentials—in all things charity."

Let there be contention if needs be ; but only to see who can preach Christ and him crucified most successfully ; who can lead the greatest number of souls to Jesus ; who can build up the church most effectually ; who can aid most in bringing the world in subjection to Him, whose right it is to reign and who shall reign from the river to the ends of the earth.

I. *What as ministers of the gospel we are to preach.*

II. *How ?*

III. *Why ?*

As ministers of the gospel we are to preach Christ crucified.

By this I apprehend the apostle meant the sentiments, doctrines and precepts of Jesus Christ, in opposition to those of the various teachers in his day ; the gospel of Christ as a system of truth, as a scheme of salvation, suited to the condition of a perishing world.

Feeling their deep degradation, men had devised various schemes to raise, ennoble and to free the human race from the shackles by which they were as it were spellbound.

Beauty there may have been in some of these schemes, but it was the beauty of the smiling corpse without life, or the beauty of the icicle glittering in the sun beams, reflecting in all their gorgeousness the prismatic colors of the rain-bow, but cold and repulsive to the touch.

But the gospel scheme of salvation, is not only one which commends itself to the understandings and the hearts of men, but in every age has proven that it possesses a secret and mighty power to elevate and ennoble and save, yes that it is, the very power of God unto salvation.



Again, by preaching Christ crucified is meant preaching the truth as it is in Jesus.

The apostle tells us that he determined to know nothing among the Corinthians save, "Jesus Christ and him crucified." Now, no one for a moment entertains the idea that he continually dwelt upon the sufferings and death of Christ. He, no doubt, declared to them the existence and character of God as he did to the Athenians on Mars Hill. He illustrated the doctrine of Providence, he insisted upon man's accountability to God, upon the various personal and social duties enjoined upon them.

But all he preached was viewed in its relation to and connection with the cross of Christ, every doctrine he preached, was made to cluster around and radiate from, and derive its efficacy, its life-giving power from Jesus Christ and him crucified. The apostle seems to have thought the truth in the abstract, as essentially different, from the same truth viewed in Jesus Christ, for he says, (Eph. iv. 21,) "If so be, that ye have heard him and been taught of him the truth as it is in Jesus."

Brethren, it is only when the truth is beheld and viewed in its relation to Jesus Christ, that it appears in its true light, lustre and glory ; only then we see it in its adaptation to our wants and condition, then it

becomes to our minds a reality upon which the soul can firmly rest.

Take for example; the truth of the existence of God.

This truth was long known before Christ came into the world. "For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood from the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head."

But how vague their notions, how faint their conceptions, and, take even the old Testament revelation, where some of the sublimest representations are given of the character of God, how unsatisfactory to the mind and how cheerless to the heart.

But now view this truth, as it is in Jesus Christ.

Behold Him exhibiting in his humanity the attributes of the Deity. He made known and exhibited in himself the nature and attributes of God. The beams of divinity passing through his humanity, as through a softening, mellowing medium, shone upon the earth with a lustre sufficiently tempered to allow of their irradiating without scorching and consuming. In him the justice and mercy, the faithfulness, power and love of the Deity, are set forth in all the glory which it is possible for mortals to conceive.

Look at the cost of Providence in the abstract.

We may admit that God exercises a control over all the works of his hands. But when we view the disordered appearances which at times seem to mark the absence of his superintending care, the triumphs of vice and the sufferings of virtue, human reason staggers and reels and the heart fears and trembles.

But if we view God's moral government as set forth in Jesus Christ, then it will assume a new form. Then we learn that all events are under the control of a kind and benevolent Father, and that all things shall ultimately work together for good to them that love God.

Again, the creation of the world when viewed in the light of human reason is a truth different from what it is when beheld in Jesus Christ. Look at the worlds as they hang in space and whirl their hasty round, look at this world, so fair, and ask, why its creation?

Was it merely to display God's power and wisdom; merely that He might have some thing to delight himself in or subjects to rule over; that generations after generations might flirt like shadows o'er the plain and then pass away? Now view this

truth as it is in Jesus, and you find that all things were created by Christ for his glory. That this world was the theatre on which was to be exhibited the world's redemption, the wonder of Calvary and where God's plan of recovering mercy was to be carried out and exemplified in the salvation of millions of our lost race, and from which the news of pardoning mercy is to be wafted from world to world.

Consider man in the light of reason, curiously and wonderfully made in the mechanism of his body and the capabilities of his soul, and this being, fallen, wretched, miserable, and learn if you can, without viewing him in Christ Jesus, the great end and object of his being.

Learn if you can, the depth of his fall ; the possibility of his restoration ; the felicity and glory to which he may attain.

Brethren, it is only when we bring the truth under the irradiation of the cross of Christ, it is only when it is made to sparkle with the rays of his divinity, that it will cause our hearts to glow and to burn, that we may preach aright and only then that we shall be able to concentrate the rays of truth to a focus in the hearts of our hearers, that they may warm and melt and burn.

Brethren, preach the truth, but, preach the truth as it is in Jesus. We are to preach Christ in his essential character, as the true God, begotten of the father from all eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, that these two natures inseparably united in one person, constitute one Christ, who suffered and bled and died, for the sins of the world.

This is the doctrine of the scriptures, of the venerable confession of the church and of the catechism. Some there are, who admit and preach that Christ is true God and true man, but they separate and tear asunder his divine and human nature. At one time, and under some circumstances, they view him as God, and under others, as only man, leaving us but half a Saviour. Especially do they rob him of his divinity, when on the cross, offering himself as an atonement for the sins of the world, thus robbing that atonement of all its virtue and efficacy, for it is only through the personal union of the divine with the human nature, that the merits of his suffering and death possess infinite value and eternal validity, and thus perfectly counterbalance the infinite guilt of the whole human race. Nay Brethren, we are to preach Christ in his essential character as the God-man, as such, dying for us ; as such, being present with his people, according to his own prom-

ise, "I am with you always, unto the end of the world."

It is the glory and boast of the christian, the sure foundation of his hope, that Christ died for him, not merely as a man, but as the Godman. This has ever been the theme upon which the church in every age has dwelt in sweetest song.

"Jesus my Saviour and my God,  
Thou hast redeemed me with thy blood,"

"Forbid it Lord that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God."

And O ! with what ecstatic feelings, with what rapturous emotions, has not the church swelled and pealed forth the divine song ?

"Alas and did my Saviour bleed,  
And did my sovereign die."

It is in view of this glorious truth, that you are charged to feed the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood. I care not how much reason and Philosophy startle and array themselves against this doctrine. It is a subject of pure revelation, and the things which revelation testified were never designed to be, nor can they become the materials of future philosophical investigation or improvement. In view of this doctrine we can confidently preach Christ and Him crucified ; we can hold up his atonement as all sufficient and complete,

and present him as an ever able and willing Saviour—able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come to him. We can now confidently point the inquiring soul to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, assured that none coming aright shall ever be turned away disappointed.

But how are we to preach Christ crucified ?

*a* With all simplicity and plainness.

It was thus the preaching of the great apostle was characterized among the Corinthians. He tells us that his speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom ; he used none of those arts of which great orators availed themselves in his day, (and which some pulpit orators attempt in our day,) to become popular and to gain notoriety ; he did not wish to make *himself* conspicuous, but the *truth* ; he did not wish to captivate and gain them over to himself, but to Jesus Christ ; he well knew that though by displays of eloquence and wisdom he might seem to gain some, yet their faith or religion, resting upon the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God's truth and grace, would not stand. It is worthy of note, that the apostle discriminates between the language in which he set forth the truth and the truths he taught, and I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or

of wisdom. He neither gilded the edge of the sword of the Spirit so as to blunt its keenness, or garnished it with flowers that it could not be seen, but he wielded it in its keen nakedness, and caused it to glitter in the clear sunbeams of heaven's truth, so that fear came upon all, both Greeks and Jews, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Neither did he entertain his hearers with the wisdom of the schools; with mere abstractions; with visionary theories; with beautiful, but cold and airy fancies. But he held forth the wisdom of God, in the mystery of a world's redemption, through Jesus Christ. And yet Paul was not an inefficient preacher. Behold him on Mars' hill, at Athens, thrilling the hearts of the learned Greeks with the power of his eloquence; at Lystra, where he was compared to Mercury, the God of eloquence.

But Paul's eloquence was that of the understanding and heart, fired by the importance of the subjects he presented; inspired by the glorious and fearful results; the incalculable interests at stake.

Brethren, in our preaching, let Paul be our model, both as to the subject, matter and manner of our exhibiting the truth. Let us present the truth as it is in Jesus, in all simplicity and plainness—but with all the heart-thrilling eloquence we can. If



upon any themes, public speakers can be roused and fired, it should be upon those on which we are called to dwell ; the character of the Infinite Jehovah ; the mysteries of redemption ; the perishing condition of the sinner ; the solemnities of the judgment ; the glories of heaven, and the awful agonies of the damned. O ! is there not enough in these subjects to set on fire, and call into action all the energies of our souls. We are to preach Christ crucified, with all earnestness.

How comes it, asked a noted Bishop of Garrick, the tragedian, that I, in expounding divine doctrines, produce so little effect upon my congregation, while you can so easily rouse the passions of your audience by the representation of fiction ? The answer was short and pithy. Because, replied the tragedian, I recite falsehoods as if they were true, while you deliver truths as if they were fiction.

I am afraid, brethren, there is too much truth in this rebuke ; we preach too often as a matter of course, because we must fill an appointment, and are not as thoroughly pervaded with the truth and the infinite importance of what we preach. The position we occupy is unique, it finds no parallel in heaven or on earth ; we are ambassadors, commissioned by the court of heaven, entrusted with offers

of mercy to a guilty and rebel world—ambassadors for Christ. God through us beseeches men to be reconciled to God, (2 Cor. v. 20.)

Can we trifle, when the honor of Jehovah, the glory of the Redeemer, and the eternal salvation of blood-bought souls are at stake ?

We are to preach Christ crucified, under the conviction that all our efforts will be of no avail without the blessing of the great Head of the church, and the efficacious influences of the Holy Ghost. What will be accomplished with all our zeal, however fervent ; what with all our boasted learning ; with all our impassioned eloquence, if it be not accompanied with the approbation of Jesus Christ, and the efficacious influences of his Holy spirit ? Though Paul preaches, the Lord must open a Lydia's heart. "Without me ye can do nothing," is the declaration of the Master.

"A Paul may plant and an Apollos may water, but it is God who giveth the increase."

The secret of our success lies in our looking to and depending upon Jesus for the influences of his Holy Spirit. The history of the church in every age, proves that those were the most successful ministers of Jesus Christ, who despairing of their own, even their best efforts, continually depended upon, looked

and prayed for the blessing of heaven upon their labors. It is thus, the feeblest instrumentality may accomplish wonders, thus the preached word will become the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation.

III. *Why are we to preach Christ crucified?*

Simply because we can preach nothing better, nothing calculated to attain and secure the great end of preaching; nothing which can raise degraded humanity, to the high dignity and glorious privileges of the sons of God and heirs of glory; nothing which can stay the mighty floods of iniquity; nothing which can arrest the attention, awaken the slumbering longings and aspirations of the soul, long enslaved by sin; nothing which can kindle hope in those ready to despair, and nothing which can give peace to the troubled soul, and enable it to rejoice in hope of the glory of God!

Has not everything human intellect could devise been tried, and long tried, in vain—civilization, education, philosophy, numberless associations of moral reform.

Had not God left the world for ages, to work out the problem of its own salvation, but all to no purpose. "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God;" was not He con-

strained in his infinite mercy, by the preaching of Christ crucified, (which was esteemed as foolishness) to save them that believe.

We are to preach Christ crucified, because it is the power and wisdom of God.

The scheme of salvation through Jesus Christ, not only eminently displays the wisdom of God, but it contains, nay it is the power of God unto salvation. As such, it has ever proven itself.

The history of the world, and of the church from its morning dawn at Jerusalem, not only testifies to its power, but rolls on, accumulating evidence with every succeeding age.

Go, and see the moral wastes of heathenism rejoicing and blossoming as the rose, and ask by what appliances or instrumentalities it was effected, and the answer will be, by the preaching of Christ crucified; go and ask yonder man, reclaimed from his bold career of sin and iniquity, clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus, learning lessons of divine wisdom, ask him by what means he was arrested in his course of sin, and brought to Jesus' feet, and he will answer, by the preaching of Christ crucified; go and ask yonder christian, whence his comforts, his enjoyments, his hopes, and he will tell you through Christ crucified; go and ask

the blood bought throng on high, encircling the throne of the Lamb, with harps, new strung and attuned in praise of Him who loved them and gave himself for them, what raised them to that high of glory, and they with one loud, long shout, will make the heavens reverberate with the answer—Christ crucified.

Brethren, this is the talisman by which you can effect wonders. This, the charm by which you can entrance the sinner, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

This, the lever by which you can raise the moral world to God and to glory. A young minister once asked an aged christian, what shall I preach ? he received for answer, preach Christ. O ! I have preached him already, well then, replied the christian, preach him again and again, preach him always and preach him only.

The bane of the church in the present age, appears to be, that the spirit of the world, restlessness, change, novelty, display has crept in, so that men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own desires, heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, turning away their ears from the truth unto fables.

Hence it is, that the sacredness of the pastoral

relation is so little regarded and dissolved for the most frivolous causes.

In our day, the inquiry in the selection of a pastor is often, What appearance will he make in the pulpit ? Are his manners sufficiently polished for the social circle ? Can he attract large audiences by his eloquence ? Whereas, the inquiry ought to be, Is he a man of God, and deeply imbued with the spirit of the Master ? Does he faithfully preach Christ crucified ? In our day, the sacred desk is often made the arena for the exhibition of mere abstractions, visionary theories, philosophical speculations, fierce controversies. These things ought not so to be. Brethren of the laity and clergy, let us clear our skirts from any imputations of this character, let us use our utmost endeavors, that throughout the length and breadth of our church, Christ and Him crucified may be faithfully preached—Christ always—Christ only.

## ADDRESS AT THE FUNERAL OF REV. DR. HENRY BAUGHER.

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(For eighteen years the honored president of Pennsylvania College.)

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I rise not to attempt a eulogy upon our dearly beloved brother, and fellow-laborer in the cause of Christ, and in the interests of our beloved Zion. I should feel myself inadequate to the task at any time, and especially so, as that cold and lifeless form before me, vividly recalls fond memories of the past, when associated with us in the active duties of life, laboring together in the kingdom of our blessed Lord, and the church to which he was so ardently devoted. We feel sad as the conviction is forced upon us, that he shall go in and out no more with us, that he has, to so many of us, been unexpectedly called away—that his presence, his noble and manly form, his friendly greetings, his intercourse, always pleasant and cheerful, yet always dignified, shall no more be seen and enjoyed by us.

Always the same in the sacred retirement of the family circle ; in his intercourse with the citizens of this place ; in the meetings of the Board of

Trustees ; in the councils of the church, and amidst the students of the Institution.

But he has filled the measure of his duty. The Great Master has called him to his reward, that he may rest from his labors. But his works of faith and labors of love cannot die ; through these he still lives, speaks and acts. He has opened fountains of knowledge, and caused rills to flow upon the current of human life, whose influence for good, for time and for eternity, cannot be calculated.

Men who sat at his feet, and received their intellectual, moral and religious training through him, shall wield a mighty power for good in the councils of the nation, and assist greatly in moulding its morals and advancing its high destiny. Others, who were trained through his instrumentality, are standing forth as shining lights in the church, proclaiming the unsearchable riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus ; and others, again, are at the head of our literary and theological institutions, training and qualifying men for usefulness in the various pursuits of life. These in their turn shall qualify others to take their places, and when will this end ? Not until time shall cease.

I stand not here to eulogize the dead. The good need no eulogy—our brother needs none.



His eulogy is deeply engraven upon the hearts of all who knew him. Few, if any, knew him but to regard, love and esteem him. He needs no high towering monument; he has high towering, living, walking, breathing monuments throughout the church and the land.

His epitaph need not be written; it gushes up from many a warm and loving heart, as it gives utterance of regard and esteem. It is engraven upon the entablature of the throne on high, "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them." Pennsylvania College stands forth as a befitting monument, not only the building, but also its name and fame.

Associated with it from the beginning—for eighteen years its worthy President—his name has been incorporated with its very existence. As long as it shall be known, the name of Dr. Baugher can never be forgotten.

Brethren, this sad event calls upon us, especially those of us who have been so long associated with the deceased, in the management of this institution, and quite especially upon those of us who have the frosts of many a winter upon us, to do with all our might what yet remains for us to do,

to fill up the measure of our duty in that sphere in which the Master has placed us, that we may be ready at His call.

To the family and mourning friends we would only say, you know as well as I can tell you, the source of all comfort and the sure ground of our hope. We commit you to God and the word of his grace, which is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF DR. JACOBS.

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(In Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church.)

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The event which has convened us to-day, in this house of God, is not of an ordinary character, as the insignia of mourning with which it is shrouded, significantly remind us. Sad as it makes us feel, it has not come upon us suddenly ; we have been gradually prepared for it. Like the grain is gradually ripening for the harvest, so our friend has been gradually ripening for the harvest home above.

Whilst our loved ones still linger with us, though in enfeebled health, it affords us a melancholy pleasure to minister to their wants, and occasionally meet them in the walks of life, or visit them in the retirements of the home circle, when however, the brittle cord which bound them to earth is snapped assunder, and the golden chain which linked congenial minds and kindred spirits is severed, we can scarcely realize the fact. The report, "Dr. Jacobs is dead," affected us differently, than the report that he was ill, and gradually sinking to the tomb. But he is gone. The master has called him to his home on high.

I can without the least affectation, in all sincerity, say, that I had rather taken my place on this sad occasion, with the bereft and mourning friends—mingle my tears with theirs ; to have my feelings calmed, and my heart comforted by the consolations of the gospel, proclaimed by another, than to occupy the place I now do. Remembrances of the past, of long cherished friendship, of social intercourse, of spiritual communion, from the earlier years of my ministry, unbroken and uninterrupted to the present day, force themselves upon my mind.

In this family circle I was ever welcomed, rather as one belonging to it, than as a stranger or visitor.

There was my home, during the meetings of our Boards for years, until his affliction, sufferings and failing strength, so wrought upon my feelings as to unfit me for duty. But death severs the closest ties, and tears asunder the golden links which unite loving hearts, but death cannot obliterate the fond memories of the past, nor erase from our hearts the cherished affection of our loved ones—we ever fondly cherish the memory of our sainted dead.

I attempt no eulogy of the departed one. The faithful and good need no towering monuments, no flattering eulogies, to keep in cherished remem-

brance, their names. Their deeds and their lives are their eulogy—these speak louder than words. Nay, I should fear that by so doing, I would offer an insult to the friends of Pennsylvania College—to the church at large and to this community, as though they were not disposed justly to appreciate the worth of the departed in every relation of life.

Connected with Pennsylvania College, as one of her professors from the very beginning, his whole life is interwoven with her history; in her darkest days he stood manfully at his post; he wept for her in her sorrows, and rejoiced in her prosperity, all his faculties and powers were inscribed upon and sacrificed on her altars, and he lived to see her take an honorable rank among the cherished institutions of the land. He has filled the full measure of his duty here below, and the Master has called him to a higher and nobler sphere. But his works of faith and labor of love cannot die. Through these he still speaks and lives and acts; he lives in the fondly cherished remembrance of the church, in whose institution he has so long and faithfully labored; he lives in grateful remembrance with all who sat at his feet, and received their intellectual and moral training through him, and none can think of their Alma Mater, without fondly and gratefully cherish-

ing his memory ; he lives in the affectionate regard of the trustees of Pennsylvania College, who will ever bear in mind his active and successful labors ; he lives in the esteem of all who were associated with him as co-laborers in the institution ; he lives in the affections of this community, in whose midst he has spent the greater part of his life, with whom he has enjoyed the amenities of social intercourse, with whom he has mingled in life's active scenes, with whom he has worshipped the God of our fathers.

But he not only lives in the cherished remembrance of all who knew him, but he lives and acts through the effects of his labors ; he lives and acts through those whom he has qualified for usefulness in the varied spheres of life. He has opened fountains and caused rills to flow upon the current of human life, whose waters shall never cease to roll on, and whose influence for good, for time and eternity, cannot be calculated.

Men who received their intellectual training through him, shall wield a mighty influence in the councils of the nation ; others are standing forth as shining lights in the church, proclaiming the riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus ; others are at the head of our literary institutions and theological seminaries, in their turn again, qualifying others to

succeed them. Thus the just, after they shall have been called to their reward, shall live. The fountains they have opened, and the streams they have caused to flow, will roll on as long as time endures ; the reflection of the light which they have shed abroad, like circles in the water, will widen and widen until they reach beyond human vision, and thousands whom they have never known, will rise and call them blessed.

This however, is only the immortality of earth. He lives in those higher realms beyond, freed from the shackles of this frail body—from the cares, toils and anxieties of life, bathing in the light of God's countenance, drinking at the source—the fountain of all blessedness, and mingling with the good and wise of all ages, grasping and comprehending the mysteries of nature, providence and grace. Beholding that Jesus, whom he loved and served here below and joining in ascriptions of praise, and honor, and glory to God and the Lamb. And from yonder height, methinks I see him beckoning us to meet him there. We are, however, by this event, taught some wholesome lessons, which we should lay to heart and seek to improve.

One by one of the men who were identified with our institutions as professors, are passing away.

The venerable and lamented Krauth, Sr., passed away, May 30th, 1867, and was buried Saturday afternoon, June 1st, aged seventy years and twenty-three days.

Dr. Henry Baugher, so long the honored president of Pennsylvania College, died April 14th, 1868, aged sixty-four years, three months and five days, and now Dr. Jacobs, who died August 1871, aged sixty-three years, six months and four days.

How loud the call to those who are yet laboring as their successors, to be faithful to their sacred trusts; faithful to the Lord and Master, that they too, may receive the crown of life, and meet those who have gone before, where partings are known no more. This sad event calls upon us especially, who have so long been associated with the deceased in the interests of Pennsylvania College, and particularly upon those of us in more advanced life, whose heads are whitened by the frosts of many a winter, to do with all our might what yet we have to do; to fill up the measure of our duty in that sphere of life, in which God has placed us, that we also may be ready at the bidding of the master.

To the citizens of Gettysburg, among whom our departed friend and brother has so long resided; who have met him in earlier days, in his regular



walk to his post of duty ; in social intercourse in the house of God, this event addresses itself with peculiar force ; he was emphatically one of you ; you shall meet him no more on earth ; seek to meet him in heaven.

Bereaved and mourning relatives : I would not rudely trespass upon the hallowed sacredness of your family circle, nor lacerate your hearts by depicting scenes of affection and love, or by recalling fond memories of the past, or by attempting to portray the sad and trying scenes through which you have passed in these latter years. I would much rather point to the glory-land on high, and bring down its reflection, and throw its light o'er the deep gloom which rests upon you, to calm and lull your hearts into sweet and holy submission to Him, who doeth all things well, and who behind a frowning Providence ever hides a smiling face.

The dark cloud which overshadows you has a silver lining. It is irradiated by the christian's hope and the christian's glory, and from beyond it comes the voice of the Almighty, I will be the widow's God and the father of the fatherless. And as we gaze at it by the eye of faith, its darkness seems to be dissolving, its lining becoming brighter and brighter, and its irradiations bearing heavenward, seem to say, There ! There ! we shall meet again.

ADDRESS AT THE FUNERAL OF PROFESSOR, REV. S. S. SCHMUCKER, D. D.

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(In Christ's Evangelical Lutheran church at Gettysburg.)

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Unexpectedly, I appear before this grief-stricken assembly and these mourning friends on this sad occasion. I can scarcely describe my feelings, when on Sunday evening, I received the startling dispatch, "Dr. Schmucker is dead." It came to me like a flash of lightning from a clear sky; especially so, as a few weeks ago, he appeared, and took an active part in the meetings of the Boards, as in time past, apparently manifesting at least a partial recuperation of his strength, giving his family and the church hope that he might yet tarry awhile with us. But alas, how delusive our hopes. It seems to have been but like the bright flickering up of the lamp, when the oil had been nearly spent, giving a brighter light, and then to leave us in darkness and sorrow. But methinks I hear one, who was ever ready to sympathize with the sorrowing and bereft, as he looks upon this lifeless form, whispering in sweetest, softest, soothing tones, as once he did of old, "Our friend sleepeth," and we with faith and confidence,

reply with the disciples, "Lord, if he sleep he shall do well."

It is a sad reflection, that those whose life-history has been interwoven with the history of the church, and of our cherished institutions, one after another passing away, obliterating from life's pathway, long cherished landmarks. Though this be so, yet they can never be blotted out from the heart's cherished remembrance. There they will ever flourish, fresh, and green as the flowers of spring after the morning showers.

Who, among the sons of the church that received their intellectual, moral and religious training in these institutions, can ever forget the revered names of Drs. Krauth, Baugher, Jacobs and Schmucker? Nor can, or will the church ever forget them, for they have left an impress there so deep, that it can never be obliterated and so marked, that it can never escape notice. Dr. Schmucker, was the founder of both these institutions. I well remember the energy and perseverance with which he devoted himself to their establishment, amidst many discouraging circumstances. Many others would have failed, but so firmly was he convinced of their absolute necessity, for the welfare and prosperity of the church, that he labored and prayed

until he saw them fully established, and in the kind Providence of God, he was permitted to see them a mighty power in the church for good ; raising the standard of education ; giving a higher tone to her spiritual life ; and a ministry, not only qualified for the work, but men who will rank equal to those of any church in the land.

Dr. Schmucker cannot indeed be called the founder of the General Synod, yet, when the attempt made by the fathers had failed, and was about being abandoned, it was mainly through his instrumentality, that it was revived, and has become a fixed fact, an honor and blessing to the church.

For some time, indeed, through declining strength, he was not able to engage in active labor, yet he manifested as deep and heartfelt an interest in these institutions as ever.

But he has passed away in a good old age, like a shock of grain fully ripe for the harvest, gathered to the sainted fathers, to mingle with his co-laborers, who have gone before, and with them to enjoy "The rest that remaineth for the people of God."

He is dead, but his works of faith and labor of love cannot die. As long as Pennsylvania College sends forth her streams of light ; as long as our Theological Seminary qualifies and sends forth her

ministers ; as long as the General Synod exerts her hallowing influence o'er the church, so long shall Dr. Schmucker live in our greatful remembrance, through the length and breadth of her boarders. Nor is his life work on earth done. He is still laboring in the church, preaching through those whom he has qualified for the ministry ; exerting an influence in our institutions, all over the land by those in whose breasts he has enkindled a deep interest in their welfare, and who now mainly constitute their custodians.

To leave such records behind us is worth living for. Every christian should seek to set up way-marks, to guide others in the way to duty and usefulness ; to open fountains, where the fainting and perishing may quench their thirst, and to give utterance to sentiments and feelings, whose echoes may fire and thrill the hearts of those who live after he is gone.

Our Brother's work is done. The Master has stamped his approbation upon it, in the success which has crowned his labors and has called him to his rest.

Death is a silent, but powerful and eloquent preacher. That inanimate form recalls fond memories of the past ; of social intercourse ; of kindly

greetings ; of gatherings in the family circle ; of holy communions in the house of God ; and admonishes us to act well our part in life, and to prepare to meet our end with composure and triumph.

Mourning friends, under trying circumstances like these ; vain and unavailing are all the consolations we can present, or the sympathies we can tender you. You need the more effectual consolation, which our holy religion imparts ; you need the sympathy of Him who calmed and soothed the hearts of the mourning sisters of Bethany, and said unto them, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet, shall he live."

You know whither to go for consolation ; you have realized its sufficiency in darkest hours. It has not, it cannot fail us.

Look aloft, and by the christian's faith pierce, the veil that hides from our view the abodes of the blessed, and as you in imagination hear the song of the redeemed, and see the white-robed throng, crowned with victor's wreaths, rejoice that your loved one is there. Dry your tears, and rejoicingly exclaim, We will meet thee there !

## CONFIRMATION ADDRESS.

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TEXT.—Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth. Jer. iii. 4.

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We have met this morning on a very interesting and solemn occasion. We are about to receive a number of persons, to membership into the church, by the impressive rite of confirmation. It is a scene which should be witnessed with deep interest, by the whole congregation. A scene upon which angels, no doubt, look down upon with intense delight, and which calls forth the loudest, sweetest songs of praise ; a scene which the Saviour himself delights to witness ; a scene which causes the pastor's heart to rejoice ; but which at the same time causes him anxious solicitude, and trembling apprehensions ; a scene which parents, sisters and brothers of those who are to be confirmed, should especially look upon with deep and heartfelt anxiety and ardent prayer. This is a time, my dear young friends, to you who are about to take the most solemn vows, of great moment, pregnant with consequences, the most momentous, the most happy, if you remain

faithful, the most fearful, if you should prove unfaithful.

The addition of members to a congregation, imposes special duties upon each member of the church, to feel an interest in them, to give them an example and pray for them.

The adding of members, is often considered as a matter of course, and little interest is taken in them, nothing done for them, they are often forgotten and lost sight of. No wonder, under such circumstances that many turn back again to the world. Let us all, pastor, people and friends, hold up their hands, encourage their hearts, and let our fervent, believing and persevering prayers, ascend to a throne of grace in their behalf. My dear young friends, you this day enroll yourselves among the followers of Christ, and profess to set out upon a christian life. Imagine not, that amidst your surroundings, you will have no difficulties ; that by your own strength you will be enabled to overcome them, relying upon your own strength you will fail, for even the apostle felt his own weakness, and exclaimed, "Not as though we are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God," (2 Cor. v. 2.)

Think not, that by your own prudence, wisdom and foresight you can guide and direct yourselves,



you need a better and unerring guide. There is one who appeals to you in the most affectionate and urgent manner, Wilt thou not from this time, (this day of your solemn expousals,) cry unto me ? My father thou art the guide of my youth.

The words of the text contain an appeal to the young in general, and especially to you, who are about dedicating yourselves to God. It is the appeal of a kind and affectionate parent, who feels the deepest interest in your welfare. Can you disregard it ?

It is a particular personal appeal, Wilt thou, not from this time, cry unto me, my, Father, thou art, thou shalt from henceforth be the guide of my youth. It is however, not only a personal appeal, wilt thou, but it appeals also to our consciousness of the obligations resting upon us, from the consideration of privileges enjoyed. Thou, who hast been reared under religious influences ; the subject of many prayers ; who hast been consecrated to God's service in holy baptism ; who has hast attended a course of lectures ; whose life has been crowned with so many mercies, and prolonged to this day ; who are convinced, you ought to dedicate yourself to God, and have resolved to do so, this day. Now

in view of your consciousness of these facts, this appeal in the text is made to you.

The young especially need a guide ; a competent guide. The prophet, taught by his own experience, declared, (Jer. x. 23,) "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps." David prayed, "Show me thy ways, teach me thy paths," (Ps. xxv. 4.) At all times, especially in our day, when surrounded with so many allurements, temptations and evil examples, do the young need a guide under such circumstances. The question often arises, where withal, shall a young man cleanse his way ? and the only sure answer that can be given, is, by taking heed thereto, according to thy word.

They need a guide, because they are in danger. They are in danger, from the very sprightliness and vivacity of youth ; unsuspicious and easily captivated by appearances, they are ready to fall in with the views and practises of those around them ; they are in danger from their own inexperience ; they have entered upon, to them, an untrodden path ; like a traveller who takes a journey through an unknown country, not acquainted with difficulties which beset his path—there are so many diverging roads, and many travellers, some taking one, and others another course—as such an one needs a competent guide, and a correct chart to direct him, so those who enter upon a religious course need a safe guide and a correct chart, upon which their course is clearly marked out.

But where can such a guide be found, upon whom they can safely rely, and who is willing to guide them all their journey through? Many imagine they are sufficient to guide themselves, they have tried it, and have failed. Some have followed the many living guide posts they have met on every side, and have been led into the paths of unbelief, worldliness, forgetfulness of God, into degrading vices.

There is but one safe guide, the Lord Jesus. He graciously offers himself to us, and urges us now from this time to accept of him and submit ourselves to his direction. He is a faithful and sure guide. He will guide us by his word, his word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. He will guide us by his counsel through life, and afterwards receive us to glory. He guides us by enlightening our minds, by influencing us by his Holy Spirit, by bringing us into and under the influence of the church. Submit yourselves to this guide, make the word of God the rule of your life, and fervently pray, O Lord! be thou the guide of my youth.



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